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Sat.d Henry O'Neill
8. Middle Mountjoy
Dublin

Oct. 7th 76

LOTHAIRE;

A ROMANCE,

IN SIX CANTOS:

WITH

NOTES.

BY

ROBERT GILMOUR.

Most wretched man who hopes in long disguise
To veil his evil deeds from mortal eyes;
Tho' all were silent else, the sounding air,
The conscious earth, his trespass shall declare.

HOOLE'S ARIOSTO.

LONDON:

Printed by W. Wilson, 4, Greville-Street,

FOR GEORGE COWIE AND CO. IN THE POULTRY.

1815.

OLEIAN
P
23 JUL 1969
RARY

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following Romance is founded upon a Tale that I have read in prose, but the name of the novel which contains it, I forget. The story in prose, as far as I can recollect it, is simply this: "Lothaire sleeps in a cave, and is disturbed with visions. He finds he had slept upon a grave, and discovers a battle-axe upon it. He takes it up and leaves the cave. He is met by a hermit, who conducts him to the castle of a Baron, and then opening his garment, discovers nothing but a human skeleton inside." This is all I remember of the prose; so that I may justly claim the merit

of originality in the following Romance. After I had finished it, I was informed by Ensign French, of the 1st West India regiment, since deceased, that he had seen a Melo-drama performed at Astley's, called, "Blood will have Blood; or, the Battle of the Two Bridges," which, upon my reading him the manuscript, he said, resembled this Romance in some parts. However, as I have neither seen performed, nor read the Entertainment above-mentioned, I cannot be supposed to have borrowed from it, except in the circumstance mentioned in the 9th, 10th, and 11th lines of the 19th verse of the 5th Canto, which I afterwards inserted on hearing a description of the piece from the mouth of Mr. French.

R. G.

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PREFATORY POEM.

Muse of the South! that lingering long
In Northern Britain's colder shore,
Struck to the harp thy wildest song,
That harp which Scotia's poet bore.

O let thy kindred clime again
The blessings of thy presence know!
In Albion wake the deathless strain,
Or wake at least no worthless glow!

So shall the lands, around whose shore
The foamy waves of ocean boil,
Be by the world held evermore,
One muse, one people, and one isle!

Lothaire.

CANTO I.

THE CAVERN.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO I.

THE CAVERN.

I.

Fast as the light of day decayed
So fast the tempest's clamour ceased;
The winds in gentle murmurs played,
And softly swept the ocean's breast:
The thunder ceased its sullen sound,
The lightning stopped its angry glare,
The waves in murmurs rolling round,
No longer drenched with foam the air.
Serene and calm the evening smiled
On green Calabria's lonely shore,
And with the wood dove's song beguiled,
The tempest thundered death no more!

But many a gallant breast was cold
That saw the morning's purple ray,
O'er whom the broken billows rolled,
Their vessel wrecked within the bay!

II.

Alone had scaped the young Lothaire,
Who thro' the boiling flood, all bare,
When sunk the seaman band,
Had boldly ploughed his dangerous way,
Lashed with strong arm the foamy spray,
And safely gained the land:

III.

Naked and cold upon the shore
With weed and white foam covered o'er,

Pensive awhile the warrior stood,
And eyed the broad-extended flood:
There, mast and cordage floated wide,
And scatter'd planks o'erspread the tide,
And many a body void of breath
Came rolling to the beach in death.
Deep was the sigh that sudden broke
As from the wave he turn'd his look,
And round surveyed the lonely coast,
In fading twilight almost lost:
Far on the left a dreary wood
Of solemn pines, umbrageous stood,
And to the right, where bladed grass
Shewed level space for foot to pass,
Close to the meadow's ample way
A lofty, caverned mountain lay.
The Sun was sunk from mortal sight,
The skies had lost their crimson light;
Darkness drew wide her curtain round,
And lonely silence reigned profound.

High in mid Heaven her orb of light
The cloudless moon revealed to sight,
And casting on the scene her ray,
Illumed it with a silver day.
The wood-dove slept beneath the gleam,
And left the owl alone to scream,
And thro' the shade, intent on prey,
The forest-savage stalked his way.

IV.

Lothario, when the trumpet's peal
Mixed with the dinted clash of steel,
And javelin-tempests, like a cloud
Covered the sun with flying shrowd,
Had undismayed, in battle's yell
Fronted the storm that round him fell,
But now his heart confessed a fear—
The forest savage prowling near,

And in his grasp no trusty brand
His headlong onset to withstand,
But wrecked, and naked on a shore,
Where ne'er his feet had trod before,
Wild woods and desart mountains nigh—
No wonder anxious beamed his eye!
Cautious and silent on he passed,
And reached a yawning cave at last,
Which in the mountain's shaggy side
Its gloomy shelter opened wide—
  Here stopped the young Lothaire:—
He listened—his attentive ear
No sound within the cave could hear;—
He looked—no object met his sight,
And he resolved to sleep the night
  In dreary darkness there!

V.

He entered in the gloomy cell,
And on an earthern mound's rude swell,
  Which in the cavern lay,
Stooped down his head, and soon his eyes
Did slumber's sudden death surprise
  With irresistless sway.
But dreadful dreams disturbed his rest,
For round his lowly bed
Appeared, in shadowy armour drest,
To stalk the buried dead!
Slowly they waved their dim pale steel
As by the knight they passed;
Their vizards lifted, did reveal
Each countenance stern and ghast!

VI.

Glad was Lothario when the ray
Of morning shewed approaching day,
As glimmering through the cavern's night,
Shot the first beams of orient light.
Disturbed and unrefreshed he rose,
And wiped the cold sweat from his brows,
Then gazing round the ample cell,
Saw that the earthern mound's rude swell,
Where naked from the stormy wave
Sleepless he stretched him—was a *grave!*
Struck with amaze, his countenance fell,
When, in a corner of the cell,
He saw a cloak, moth-eaten, lie,
Stained with dark spots of gory dye,
And near it, streak'd with sanguine crust,
A massy war-axe, brown with rust!

VII.

"No doubt," the musing warrior said,
"The blood upon thy steel, dark blade!
"Was drenched from him, who in this grave
"Now mouldering lies—some warrior brave!
"And thou, damp, torn, and gory cloak,
"Hid with dark veil his murderer's look;
"No wonder thus disturbed I lay,
"This cave has witnessed unfair play!
"By heav'ns! in righteous battle's strife,
"I sought with zeal each foeman's life;
"But ere my hand, by malice led,
"Should dye itself in murder red,
"I'd forfeit all a hero's claim,
"And brand me with eternal shame!
"However, thus expos'd and bare,
"This cloak will shield me from the air;

"And this huge axe from beasts of prey,
"Defend me on my lonely way."
He said, and wrapped him in the cloak,
And in his grasp the war-axe took.

VIII.

Soon as he left the gloomy cell,
Soft on his cheek the sea-breeze fell,
And mildly from th' ethereal way
Flamed the broad golden orb of day.
The skies with morning glories spread,
Blush'd like a virgin-bride with red,
And pleasing from the mountain nigh
Murmured the bee while passing by.
The wild flower shed its fragrance sweet,
And echoing from the wood-retreat,
From every leafy shrub and tree,
Wild swelled the choral harmony.

The bladed grass was dropped with dew,
And all the landscape fair to view;
But vainly to the grief-struck heart
Does nature all her charms impart!

IX.

Slow thro' the meadow's grassy way,
To anxious thoughts and cares a prey,
Lothario bent his lonely pace,
And long time had he strayed;
When from a narrow dell was seen
A figure of unusual mien,
Almost concealed from sight his face,
In monkish cowl arrayed!

X.

"Hail, father!" so the youth begun;
Who, turning, answered, "Hail, my son!"
But in an accent strange!
Never did brave Lothario's ear
A sound before so solemn hear,
He felt his colour change!
Earnest he gazed the figure tall—
And gazing, felt cold awe appal
His troubled bosom more and more—
For he no human countenance bore!
Down to his eyebrows fell the cowl,
And gave his eyes a sullen scowl,—
While peering from their sable veil,
His half-seen lips were deadly pale!
Recovering soul, again he spake—
"I pray thee, father! shew the track

"That leads unto some village road,
"Or lordly baron's proud abode;
"Nor wonder at my strange attire,
"Or this rude battle-axe admire!—
"Both I discovered in a cave,
"When wrecked on ocean's stormy wave,
"The sole survivor of a crew,
"Naked, I there for shelter drew!"

XI.

The monk with awful answer spake,
While half Lothario started back,
Dismayed at the unearthly sound—
"My son! you tread unfriendly ground;
"What round you view, the whole domain,
"Close bordering to the ruffled main,
"Is by imperious Albert owned,
"A baron, for his power renowned.

" A little farther—and your eyes
" Shall see his lordly castle rise,
" With battlements and turrets crowned,
" And guarded by a fosse around ;
" Fain to our abbey would I lead
" Your footsteps to supply your need,
" But that from hence is far remote,
" And so is every shepherd's cot !
" But go, my son ! tho' tyrant power
" Proud lords it in yon distant tower,
" That Providence, no mortal eye
" Can mark, beholds thee from on high !
" 'Tis there that now my footsteps bend,
" And I am sent thy guardian friend !
" Yet not together must we go,
" Nor should the haughty baron know
" That I, who come in church's claim,
" With one of thy strange figure came ;
" Else the hoped gift he might withhold,
" And he has found *bad* way to gold !"

XII.

Lothario ope'd his lips no more,
For thro' his soul the accents ran,
But silently his progress bore
With speedier steps across the plain,
Till from an eminence, his eyes
Beheld the stately castle rise,
With battlements and turrets crowned,
And guarded by a fosse around.
Glad at the sight, with speed of wind
The level mead he bounded o'er,
And casting a short glance behind,
Saw the mysterious monk no more!
The sun had gained the midmost space
Of his opponent daily race,

And shone with fervid smile,
When at the castle portal stood
Lothario, and at leisure viewed
The vast embattled pile.

XIII.

Broad was the fosse, and well supplied
With water from the river's tide,
Which near the lofty ramparts strayed,
And of the fosse a fourth part made.
At south, and north, and east, and west,
Each angle to defend the best,
A lofty loopholed turret stood,
Commanding river, plain, and wood.
The battlements were broad and tall,
And many a buttress to the wall
Its massy strength and aid supplied,
And broke the river's flowing tide.

The mansion in the midst appeared:
High the stupendous fabric reared
Its spiry head, with many a row
Of pillars set in stately shew:
Casement and gallery spreading bold,
Reflected back the sun-like gold:
High on its lordly head displayed,
Loose to the wind, the banner played,
Where the baronial arms appeared,
In azure, or, and argent reared:
The country round was fair to see—
On plain, by stream, and tufted tree,
The vassal village rose to view,
Where crops of fertile plenty grew;
And interspersed the goat and deer,
With sheep and cattle grazing near,
Shewed nature of her bounty free,
Except her best gift—Liberty!

XIV.

The centinel, from his high post,
Beheld, in strange amazement lost,
  Lothario stand below:
"Ho! who art thou?" he loudly cried,
While the dread shaft his hand applied
  Unto his steel cross-bow.
Lothario found his axe and cloak
Gave to his form no friendly look,
And to the centinel thus spoke.
"A stranger I, from Holy Land,
"And one of the Crusader band—
"Wrecked by a tempest on your coast,
"Survivor to a whole crew lost.
"This strange attire I shall explain,
"If but your noble lord will deign
"To give admittance to his sight
"To one, who bears the name of knight."

XV.

The centinel gave sudden call
To the chief warder from the wall—
Who to the baron bent his way,
Who bade him to his sight convey
The stranger knight. The leader flew,
And wide the inner portal threw,
And the portcullis huge updrew:
He next the outer gate displayed,
And o'er the fosse the drawbridge laid.

XVI.

Not long he made Lothario wait,
Who entered at the castle gate.
But earnest was the warder's gaze
At his strange dress and sun-burnt face

Scarce had he entered, when again
  The portals were made fast,
And with the chieftain of the train
  Forward Lothario passed:
They left the guard that kept the fort—
Left outer and the inner court—
Scaled the stone steps with hasty tread
That to the central mansion led;
Next through the lofty pillared hall,
Passed thro' an arched passage small—
And last the private closet gained,
Where oft the baron sole remained.

XVII.

The monk flashed o'er Lothario's mind.
  When he the Baron saw,
For, saving his, no face inclined
  His breast to feel such awe:

He seemed of forty winters turned,
  His hair was red of hue,
His small grey eyes suspicious burned,
  And hollow lustre threw;
Half-worn with keen corroding care,
  To sight, he seemed to be;
Fixed on his forehead sat despair,
  And wrinkled misery:
Yet cunning, cruelty, and pride,
  With rays together blent,
Half-seen, were in his glance descried,
  With restless discontent.
His stature of superior size
Seem'd fit for hardy enterprize,
And stretched across his sinewy length,
Appeared the signs of wond'rous strength.
Not *light* the *battle-axe* or *brand*
That suited his *gigantic hand!*

XVIII.

Scarce had the leader introduced
  Lothaire unto his sight,
When his strong limbs their aid refused,
  His eyeballs lost their light.
With reeling feet and giddy head,
He tumbled, to the sight, as dead,
And uttering forth a dreadful groan,
Lay pale and senseless on the stone!

XIX.

The warder chief and youthful knight,
Astonished at the wond'rous sight,
  Called loud th' attendant train,
Who soon, by proper care applied,
And sprinkling of the river tide,
  Made life return again.

But scarce erect the baron stood,
Scarcely again Lothario viewed,
When ready he appeared once more
To sink upon the marble floor,
  Till in his servants' arms upstaid—
" Ho! warders! to the castle hall
" Lead forth this wretch who caused my fall,"
  With trembling voice he said:
" Myself will follow, and arraign
" Him guilty of dark *murder's* stain!"

XX.

Each eye was turned with piercing glance
  On young Lothario's face,
As gathering round, with sword and lance,
Swift did the warder-band advance
  To guard him to the place.

But every eye beheld appear
Amazement, and no mark of fear
  Upon his countenance fall,
As he his ponderous axe resigned,
And, followed by the guard behind,
  Bold sought the castle hall.
The castle hall was vast and wide,
And high adorned in gothic pride;
Strong fluted pillars lined the wall,
Supporting galleries broad and tall;
The casements were of ample size,
And richly stained with painting's dyes:
The portals were of solid oak,
The hinges brass, and brass each lock;
Of oak the seats and tables round,
The first with azure cushions bound:
The pavement was of varied stone,
And like a mirror smoothly shone:
Paintings displayed around were seen,
Of dames and knights with frowning mien;

And statues, in each niche's space,
Stood pale upon their marble base.

XXII.

The further end, the chair of state
Shewed where the lordly baron sate
When judgment he pronounced, or proud
Harangued the trembling vassal crowd.
High over this were seen displayed
Escutcheon, trophy, shield, and blade,
That glimmering forth a sullen light,
Seemed remnants of some tattered fight.

XXIII.

Lost in conjecture strange, the knight,
Girt by the guard and vassal band,

Before the judgment chair stood bold;
Meanwhile, his person to behold,
The castle tenants took their stand
Within the lofty galleries' height.
The baron entering, on his state
Did part of the attendants wait,
And stood on either side his chair
As down he sat with frowning air;
But 'twas a frown whose dark disguise
Concealed the terror in his eyes.

XXIV.

"'Tis known to all my vassal train,"
With stifled accent he began,
"That when my brother lost his life,
"Foul murdered by a ruffian's knife—"

Here paleness dimmed his countenance o'er,
And his voice trembled more and more;
" 'Tis known—but scarce can I relate
" The tale of his unhappy fate,
" For of his murder when I speak
" The colour changes on my cheek—
" Faulters my tongue, and swims my head,
" So dearly did I love the dead!
" 'Tis known that with the Count I was,
" And by his murderers held in chase,
" When, fearful to be overtook,
" I dropt yon axe and well-known cloak,—
" But first stretched two upon the plain,
" Whence come those spots of gory stain!
" When I admitted to my sight
" This wretch, I deemed him some bold
" knight;
" But when the axe and cloak I viewed,
" By recollection's pang subdued,

" I fainted on the marble floor,
" And feel th' effects, ev'n now, not o'er.
" No doubt of the assassin train
" This wretch was one, and I *arraign*
" *Him guilty of dark murder's stain !*

END OF CANTO I.

Lothaire.

CANTO II.

THE DUNGEON.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO II.

THE DUNGEON.

I.

All eyes were turned on young Lothaire,
But chief the baron's, with a glare
  Suspicious and dismayed:
But he, in conscious virtue bold,
His easy narrative thus told,
While silence, reigning still around,
Attended to the manly sound
  Which fearless truth displayed.
"Lord Albert! that a murderer's name
"Should brand my long unsullied fame

" Would rouse my soul to fire,
" Did not I know within thy breast
" Suspicion only came a guest
" From this my strange attire!
" Hear then my tongue the truth unfold,
" In language plain and clear;
" I trust my story, when 'tis told,
" Will satisfy thine ear.

II.

" My name, O Baron! is Lothaire,
" Of humble parents born,
" And first in Gallia's confines fair
" I saw the light of morn.
" My charge for many a year it was
" To tend my father's flock,
" A swain of no illustrious race,
" But yet of honest stock:

" But when the sovereign Pontiff bade
" The trump of war to sound,
" And Europe bared her vengeful blade,
" To rescue holy ground;
" Beneath the sacred cross I stood
" A champion for my God,
" And under Philip's care soon viewed
" The land whereon he trod.

III.

" In happy time we reached the coast,
" For Sion's ancient lord,
" And Frederick's son, with all his host
" Were yielding to the sword
" Of Caracos, who led the van
" Of Acre's sons of fame,
" Before him tumbled man on man,
" And wrapped the tents in flame.

" Our warlike numbers soon compelled
" The Pagan to retire,
" With slaughter strewed the sanguine field,
" And saved the camp from fire.
" A private soldier's rank I bore
" Alone amidst the fight,
" But Philip, when the fray was o'er,
" Ennobled me a knight.

IV.

" Soon after, Cœur de Lion came,
" With England's host along,
" His brazen armour flash'd like flame,
" The chief was tall and strong.
" Soon did the towers of Acre yield,
" Soon Europe's force prevail,
" When raging thro' the battle field
" He poured his blows like hail.

"With Caracos I saw him meet,
"And dreadful was their strife,
"Till gasping at the monarch's feet,
"The Pagan gave his life.
"Then Acre fell, and Gallia's lord,
"With secret envy fraught,
"Feigning pale sickness, sheathed his sword,
"And his own kingdom sought.

V.

"Ten thousand men alone he left
"With England's king to stay,
"That he might fall, of France bereft,
"To Saladin a prey.
"But the famed plains of Askalon
"Put to his hopes a close,
"Which saw, by Richard overthrown,
"Three hundred thousand foes.

" So were we told, when under sail
" We steered for France our way,
" By a strange bark, whose passing hail
" Informed us of the fray.
" Tho' Philip be my liege, I own
" His meanness I despised,
" And mourned my own hopes overthrown
" Of glory that I prized.

VI.

" When near this isle, a dreadful storm
" O'ertook our numerous fleet—
" The day assumed of night the form,
" The waves wild round us beat.
" We from the rest were scattered wide,
" And driven o'er the mountain tide;
" The thunder rolled with awful sound,
" The lightning fiercely flashed around—

"And such a roar from wind and wave
"Arose, as might have stunned the grave.
"Our pilot skill and courage lost,
"For on Calabria's rocky coast
"He found we drove—with dreadful shock
"That moment on a lurking rock
"The vessel split—the drowning cries
"Of gasping wretches reached the skies.
"I, on a plank, my limbs and breast
"Quick disengaged of mail and vest,
"And naked, shot the seas along,
"Made by the sight of land more strong,
"And reached at last the lonely shore,
"A spot I ne'er had trod before.
"The white foam trickled down my form,
"And round me rattled all the storm.
"I thanked my God with grateful heart,
"Yet pity in my breast took part
"For those who underneath the wave
"Had found so soon a watery grave.

VII.

" But when the parting light decayed,
" The tempest's clamorous fury ceased,
" The evening sun-beam pierced the shade,
" And sunk the raging seas to rest;
" With lonely steps I trod the shore,
" And heard the forest-savage roar,
" Till in a mountain's shaggy side
" A gloomy cavern I espied—
" The moon was up, and chill the air,
" And I resolved to shelter there.
" I stretched me on an earthen mound,
" And sudden sunk in sleep profound,
" But gladly saw the day confest,
" For dreadful dreams disturbed my rest,
" When by the light that morning gave,
" I found I slumbered on a *grave!*

" And, gazing all the cavern round,
" Saw in a corner, on the ground,
" This mouldered cloak, moth-eaten, lie,
" And yonder axe of sanguine dye.
" Naked, I wrapped me in the cloak,
" And, for defence, the war-axe took.

VIII.

" I left the cave, and thro' a mead
" Bent fast my solitary speed;
" 'Twas pleasant, as I strayed along,
" To hear the wood-dove tune her song,
" When from a narrow dell I saw
" A form, that filled my breast with awe;
" In a monk's cowl he stood arrayed,
" Which wrapt his form in sable shade,
" And only left his face to view—
" But that was like the grave in hue!

"Strange lustre lightened from his eyes,
"And more than human seemed his voice—
"'Twas him that pointed out the way
"To where your distant castle lay;
"He said himself would soon pursue,
"For that in church's claim to you
"He came, but wished not to be seen
"With one of my unwonted mien.
"Such is my tale, and had this hand
"Thy brother giv'n the mortal stroke,
"Think'st thou I would before thee stand
"With witness, like thy axe and cloak?"

IX.

Lothario marked not, as he spoke,
Lord Albert's change of hue and look,
When he described the gloomy cave,
The axe, and cloak, and earthen grave—

And marked not how encreased the change
When speaking of the cowled monk strange.
His head turned round, his heart wild beat,
And scarcely could he keep his seat.
A murmur ran around the hall
As finished young Lothaire his tale.

X.

'Twas long ere from his sudden trance
The trembling Count recovery found,
When, arming up his fearful glance,
And lifting up his voice around—
"Thy tale is plausible he said,
" And therefore be thy doom delayed
" Till comes the monk so strangely drawn—
" But, if he comes not by the dawn,
" Thy head shall from thy neck be hewed,
" So shalt thou render blood for blood!

"Ho! to the northern dungeon straight,
"Chief Warder! on thy prisoner wait!"
So speaking, from the hall he strode.—
Lothaire with indignation glowed,
And had the axe but armed his hand
Fewer had been the warder-band.
Attended by the armed train
He reached the outer court again,
Where, sudden chained by tyrant power,
They led him to the northern tower!

XI.

The warders here withdrew from sight,
And their commander sole remained,
Down many a flight of steps, the knight
Who led, in clanking iron chained;
Winding and turning as they went,
As if down some steep hill's descent,

'Twas long ere halt they made,
When to a door the chief applied
A massy key, which opening wide,
With smiling glance he said :
" Enter, Sir Knight ! your only fare
" Will be the dungeon's stagnant air,
" No other is decreed !
" And that old cloak, when stretched alone
" You slumber on the flinty stone,
" For couch must serve your need !
" Fear not grim goblins to survey,
" For never here comes down the day,
" Since where, Sir Knight ! you now reside
" Is underneath the river's tide !"

XII.

Here on Lothaire he turned the lock,
  That gave a sullen sound,
Who heard, as back his course he took,
  His distant steps resound.
The leader scaled the narrow stair
And gladly saw the upper air.

XIII.

Left in the dungeon's gloom alone,
Lothario flung him on the stone;
His shackles rattled as he fell,
And echoed awful round the cell;
Tho' high above burned brightest day,
Yet here in deepest night he lay,

While dropping cold the cieling thro'
Fell on his head th' unwholesome dew.
The darkness round, and silence drear,
Might quell the boldest heart with fear,
But indignation's swell alone
Wrung from Lothaire the bursting groan.
Stretched on th' uneven floor he lay,
To torturing thought and doubt a prey—
Now thinking of the Baron's *swoon*,
Now of the *grave* where he laid down,
Mysterious to him seemed the whole,
But chief recurring to his soul
The monk's strange words—" *Tho' tyrant*
" *power*
" *Proud lords it in yon distant tower,*
" *That Providence, no mortal eye*
" *Can mark, beholds thee from on high!*
" *'Tis there that now my footsteps bend,*
" *And I am sent thy guardian friend!*"
This—and what latterly he told—
" *And he has found bad way to gold!*"

Perplexed him long, and half he said
"This monk is neighbour to the dead!"

XIV.

While thus in restless thought he rolled
Sleep on his weary lids laid hold,
But the same visions that his eyes
Saw in the gloomy *cave* arise
  Again disturbed his rest!
For round him, as he lay outspread,
Appeared to stalk the buried dead
  In shadowy armour drest!
Slowly they waved their dim pale steel
  As by the knight they passed;
Their vizards lifted, did reveal
  Each countenance, stern and ghast!

XV.

Trembling, he woke with sudden start,
But what cold terror thrilled his heart
When shining thro' the dungeon's night
He saw appear a ray of light!
And standing o'er his flinty bed,
A figure, with a cowl o'erspread,
Whose right hand held an axe's blade,
The same that in the cavern's shade
Spotted with blood, himself had found,
Huge, massy, and with rust embrowned!
"Mysterious form! how cam'st thou here!"
Lothario cried, appalled with fear:
"The dungeon's massy door is fast—
"At what strange entrance hast thou passed?
"Or art thou not the monk I viewed,
"Some phantom to ensnare the good?"

XVI.

"No phantom I!" returned a voice
  Soft as the breeze that sighs in spring,
Sweet as the music of the skies
  When angel forms their anthems sing!
"But one of earthly mould like thee,
  "Who hither comes, by pity led,
"At this dark hour to set thee free,
  "And from the axe preserve thy head!
"Rise, knight! and to thy hand receive
  "This blade—arise to liberty!
"'Twas this that made my father grieve,
  "And I restore it back to thee!
"'Twill serve to guard thee, on thy way,
"From ruffian power and beasts of prey!
"Thy spirits also to restore,
"Take with thee this—a slender store!"

XVII.

The silver sound, the soul sprung strain
  At once dispersed Lothario's fear;
He vaulted up in clanking chain,
  And gazed the speaker's person near—
And saw, amidst the cowl's dark shade,
Before him stand a beauteous maid!
Her dark eye made his bosom move,
  Fringed by the silken lash's shade,
In whose bright softness, kin to love,
  Compassion's melting lustre played.
Much of her form he could not view,
So deep the cowl its foldings drew,
Save where the light's uncertain glare
Dwelt trembling on her bosom fair,
And shewed its gently heaving swell
As each white orb now rose, now fell.

Her graceful arms of milky hue
Distinct their polish shewed to view,
As by the streaming glare revealed
The one, a lamp and basket held,
And in the other, bore with pain
The well-known axe of sanguine stain.

XVIII.

These on the damp cold floor she laid,
And from her bosom drawn, displayed
  An iron key to sight;
With this, she turned the screw-lock round
That held the chains together bound,
  And soon released the knight.
When she beheld the warrior free,
Back in her breast she placed the key.

XIX.

Lothario, as with rattling sound
His falling fetters touched the ground,
The offered basket in his hand
Took with the war-axe, blood-distained;
Then raising his astonished look,
Thus to his fair deliveress spoke:
"If 'tis no vision cheats my sight,
"Or thou art not some form of light
"Descended from its heav'nly sphere,
"In pity for the wretched here!
"Tell, generous maid! thy unknown name;
"Say, hither by what means you came?
"So may I from amazement wake,
"Nor this for some fond dream mistake!"

XX.

Speaking, the virgin fixed he eyed,
Who, blushing rosy red, replied,
" Time presses—if I tarry here
" I justly may discovery fear:
" 'Tis fit, however, thou should'st know
" Enough, the mystery to shew.
" Edwina is the name I bear,
" Baron Alberto's only heir;
" Concealed within the galleries' height,
" I marked thee in the hall, young knight!
" When as a wretch, with murder stained
" I heard thee by my sire arraigned;
" But both thy story and thy look
" Strong to my soul, in secret, spoke,
" That thou wast guiltless of the crime—
" Anxious I waited for the time

"When the expected monk should call
"At our embattled castle-wall.

XXI.

"'Tis night—he has not yet appeared—
"Much for thy safety then I feared;
"I wrapped me in our chaplain's hood,
"By none within the castle viewed;
"Unseen I glided thro' the hall,
"And took thy chain's key from the wall;
"Took also that huge axe of steel,
"And placed of food, a scanty meal
"And flask of wine, in wicker band,
"Next snatched a lamp within my hand:
"But how with these I gained thy sight—
"Follow, and I will shew thee, knight!"

XXII.

So speaking, in her hand she took
  The lamp, whose trembling light
Around the rugged dungeon broke,
  And shewed its gloom to sight.
Lothario silently pursued,
And in a corner, fashioned rude,
  Beheld a small trap door,
Which lifted up, stood wide displayed,
Not seen before, so thick the shade,
  With earth all covered o'er.
Its inside was unshaven wood,
Where two large bolts, drawn backward,
    stood:
Beneath, the lamp's reflected light
Revealed rough steps of stone to sight!

XXIII.

Here turned the maid—" How first I found
" This gloomy passage under ground
" Was strange: one day, in pensive mood
" Alone I roamed the castle wood;
" 'Twas after my dear mother died,
" Sad victim of my father's pride,—
" When, overgrown with brambles rude,
" An opening in the ground I viewed.
" By curiosity impelled,
" Entering, my steps I forward held;
" Descending long, at length I found
" That gently upwards sloped the ground:
" Still I advanced, till in my way
" Appeared those steps your eyes survey;
" These I ascended, and soon found
" The trap-door by its hollow sound;

" The iron bolts I back withdrew,
" When this dark dungeon met my view,
" (For when the eye is long in shade,
" Faintly can objects be surveyed);
" With beating heart I forward passed,
" But found the massy portal fast.

XXIV.

" Down I descended, closed the door,
" And back again my footsteps bore;
" Returning, sudden on my right
" Another opening met my sight:
" (My heart has ever scorned the dread
" By superstitious folly bred)
" And I resolved this passage new
" T' explore, and boldly forward drew.
" It winded upwards long, and led
" To other stairs my cautious tread,
" Closed by a trap-door o'er my head.

" This opening—in a loop-holed room
" I found myself (escaped the gloom)
" Filled with, of rusty arms, a pile—
" Which passing, thro' a narrow aisle,
" To the south turret's gate I came,
" And saw the day around me flame!"

END OF CANTO II.

Lothaire.

CANTO III.

THE MONK.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO III.

THE MONK.

I.

Edwina ceased, and down the dark
  Descent, the warrior passed;
She followed—and, lest eye should mark,
  Again the door made fast.
Down the rough steps of unhewn stone,
On which the lamp's broad lustre shone,
  They both together sped—
Then in the narrow passage stood,
Low, dreary, dark, and damp, and rude,
  Like vaults where sleep the dead.

As on with silent speed they went,
It winded down in rough descent
  Beneath the river's tide,
While from the lamp reflected bright,
In scattered rays, the streaming light
  Flashed red on either side!

II.

At length upon the right was seen
  An opening rude and bare;
Here stopped the maid with smiling mien,
  And thus addressed Lothaire:
"Now, Warrior! I must quit thy sight,
"And leave thee in the gloom of night
  "Thy journey to pursue:
"Bend straight thy course, and soon thine eye
"The stars, that spangle midnight's sky
  "And castle wood shall view.

"Go, Warrior! go to liberty!
"But think that it is owed to me!"
A rosy blush suffused again
The smoothness of her cheek—
She ended, but her dark eye plain
Appeared her soul to speak.
Close to her form the cowl she drew
That hid her lovely face from view,
And with concealing mantle prest
The softness of her snowy breast,
Nor stayed she for reply—
But waving her white arm to view
The gazing warrior, bade adieu,
And vanished from his eye.

III.

O love! the soul that knows no fear,
That glows the trumpet's blast to hear,

And calmly the impetuous sea
  Turned from its bottom by the blast,
Beholds—tho' raging dreadfully,
  Its billows overwhelm the mast!
O wond'rous love! that stubborn soul
Shall bow unto thy soft controul,
Such beauty's power, and feel the dart
Shot from the bright eye to the heart!

IV.

Lothario for a moment stood
  Speechless, and rooted to the ground;
In fancy still the bright form viewed,
  And heard the voice of silver sound.
At length the silence still and lone,
And sudden darkness round him thrown,

Awoke him, thus entranced;
Pensive along the dreary way
That now led upwards to the day,
His progress he advanced.
Long had he walked—at last a light
Glimmered at distance on his sight,
And further on, he saw appear
An opening to the passage drear.
This gaining, thro' the brambles round
He speeded, and, emerging, found
Himself beneath the open sky,
And hailed the hour of liberty!

V.

Amidst a spacious wood he found
Himself, and cautious gazed around;
The castle's lofty towers were seen
Pale rising o'er the tree-tops green,

And thro' the mingled pine and oak,
Apparent to the warrior's look,
The moon upon the fosse shone bright
That trembled with her silver light.
'Twas still—save where embowered above
The night-bird tuned her song of love,
And, murmuring thro' the branches light,
Cold sighed the solemn breeze of night.
The warrior, screened from prying eye,
  Soft on a green bank sat him down;
And many a lonely wild-flower nigh
  Brightened the forest's sullen frown.
From the twined basket forth he drew
  The viands and sustaining bread,
And, sheltered from the midnight dew,
  With hunger's savoury relish fed:
Next from the flask Edwina brought
Took the enlivening purple draught,
  And found his strength restored;
Imperious nature's cravings fled,

With footsteps bare and naked head
His journey he explored.

VI.

For many a mile the youth pursued
The footpath in the dreary wood,
Cautious, lest any beast of prey
Or robber should obstruct his way,
Tho' many a chase had cleared the shade
Of beasts that once beneath it strayed.
At last he reached a spacious plain
Beyond the baron's wide domain,
And turning, glanced along the night—
Nor tower nor cottage met his sight.
Elated, thro' the moonlight field
His progress, fired with hope, he held;
While from his figure slanting back
The lengthened shadow marked his track.

The wide plain ended in a road
  Fast by a craggy jutting rock,
Beneath whose brow his dark abode
  Lothario till the morning took,
And soon did slumber's influence shed
Its poppies round his weary head.

VII.

Sweet was his rest, his slumbers light,
No dreadful visions met his sight,
But golden dreams, in pleasing ring,
Around him fluttering spread the wing:
He seemed to roam Elysian meads,
Where roses on delightful beds
With purple amaranth did twine,
And bloom of balmy jessamine:
There breezy hills and lawns displayed
Their smoothness, with soft green arrayed,

And groves of choicest fruit were seen
Midst thickets formed of myrtle green:
There, over sands of gems and gold
Transparent streams their waters rolled,
And lulling murmurs ceaseless made
Or trembling gleamed amidst the shade;
With fair Edwina, hand in hand,
He seemed to roam this Eden land,
And rapture thrilling all his breast,
Oft to his heart the maiden prest,
Whose cheek, with blushes sweet arrayed,
The purple light of love displayed.

VIII.

Near to mid-noon had verged the day
Ere slumber dried its dews away,
When woke the youth from rest:
Mild was the morn, and cool the air,
And, strengthened and refreshed, Lothaire
Felt hope inspire his breast.

From a wild ash that overhung
  The dark-projecting rock,
A branch with sudden force he wrung,
  From which a spray he took.
This round his naked head he twined,
And at the front together joined,
  To fence him in its shade;
Ere vertical the solar glare
Drank the moist dews thro' fervid air,
  And on his temples played.

IX.

This done—he traced the lonely road,
Altho' his feet severely glowed,
  Sore with the length of way.—
His right hand held the axe of blood,
His left th' unfinished wine and food
  That in the basket lay.

Had any stranger's passing glance
Lothaire's appearance seen by chance,
He would have deemed him either ghost
Or hapless wretch to reason lost,
And, fearing such wild form to meet,
Had made no slight use of his feet.

X.

For many a mile along the road
Beneath the sun that sultry glowed
His progress had he took,
When a green bank his eyes surveyed
Defended by an oak's dark shade,
Where gushed a limpid brook.
Here rested for a while Lothaire,
And sweetly on his humble fare
Contented did he dine;
Then with long draught allayed his thirst

From the clear current, mingling first
  The cold wave with his wine.
Then with fresh hope and strength renewed,
His solitary course pursued,
But left Edwina's gift behind,
Against the spreading oak reclined.

XI.

Just as he turned a winding maze
  Formed by the varying road,
Sudden before his startled gaze
  A well-known figure stood—
A cowl its tall form covered o'er
  And half concealed its face,
But that no human aspect bore,
  Unlike the earthly race :
Down to his eyebrows fell the cowl,
And gave his eyes a sullen scowl,

While, peering from their sable veil,
The half-seen lips were deadly pale!
Lothario's soul within him sunk
When he beheld again the monk!
" Hail, son!" so awful he began,
With tone unlike the voice of man;
" How comes it still, in such array,
" Alone you tread this rugged way?"

XII.

To the knight's heart his accents struck,
And mute awhile he stood—
At length recovering, with glazed look
The tall pale form he viewed—
" Say, who art thou, to death and woe
" That nearly hast my footsteps led;
" Lurks mischief in that saintly shew,
" Or art thou neighbour to the dead?

"Why did not gloomy Albert's eye
"Thy person yester-eve survey;
"So was thy promise pledged, or why
"Dost thou for ever cross my way?"

XIII.

Deep groaned the Monk, and seemed to stand
Impassioned, as the knight he viewed;
Then from his head, with solemn hand
Pulled back the covering cowl and hood.
Dread heav'n! what horror seized the knight,
How shook his inmost soul with fright!
When pale and ghastly as the grave
A countenance was seen
Whose bloodless lips, dread token, gave
He saw no human mien!
Deep in the head, an inch and more,
A hideous gash appeared,

With spattered brain and clotted gore,
All horribly besmeared!
Silent awhile the spectre stood,
And earnestly Lothario viewed;
Then lifting up its death-pale hand,
Thus spoke with accent dread—
The sound made high erected stand
The locks upon Lothario's head!

XIV.

"Blood will have blood!—the wrath of
"heav'n,
"Tho' tardy in its doom,
"Leaves first a space for mercy giv'n,
"But soon or late will come!
"The lightning from the livid cloud
"Comes not so sudden down—
"For what the guilty wretch can shrowd
"From God's avenging frown?

" Thou viewest things with earthly sight—
" But when its clay embrace
" Thy soul forsakes, thou then aright
" Wilt know how fills the Deity all space !
" Attend my tale—know I was he
" Who owned that fair domain
" But yester-eve I made thee see
" Round bordering on the main ;
" That castle and its tenantry,
" Young Warrior, once belonged to me ;
" For know, an elder brother's claim
" I bore, and Rosmond was my name.

XV.

" Ambition ! by thy influence led
" The soul becomes to virtue dead ;
" And losing every thought beside,
" Swells up in its own selfish pride.

" The towering city, once so fair,
" Tumbled in ruins, lone and bare,
" Marks wild ambition's lust;
" Thro' which, where once did plenty wave,
" Wide devastation spreads her grave
" O'er thousands laid in dust!
" O 'tis a crime, well worthy hell!
" A crime by which the angels fell;
" A crime, that in his brother's blood
" Made Albert's murderous hand be dewed!

XVI.

" Full twenty summers now have fled
" Since lovely Emmeline was dead!
" She was my spouse, and ceased to breathe
" The life-sustaining air;
" When, cause of her untimely death,
" She gave my arms a heir.

" My brother—oh! that sacred name
" How foul has he betrayed!
" Lived with me, and by all the same
" Respectful care was paid:
" Whate'er my castle could afford
" Was open to his hand;
" It scarcely seemed that I was lord,
" Or held the chief command.
" O! of affection's dearest claim
" Within my secret heart,
" Warm with the truest, brightest flame,
" How great was Albert's part!

XVII.

" Dissimulation! who can know
" The cunning of thy smile?
" Smooth as the stream thy accents flow,
" Yet poison hide the while!

" I thought affection equal bright
" Within my brother glowed,
" But mark the grateful way, young knight!
" He that affection shewed!

XVIII.

" One morning he a walk proposed
" Towards the bordering main,
" Which lay with all its billows closed
" Smooth as a level plain:
" So from the battlements we viewed
" That round commanded hill and flood.
" Cool blew the breeze—the opening flowers
" Perfumed the balmy air,
" While glancing on the castle towers
" The sun-beams trembled fair.

" My son had then two summers seen,
" A bold and sprightly boy;
" And him I took, with smiling mien,
" The ramble to enjoy.
" Robes, with sky-coloured azure dyed,
" And crimson plumes we wore,
" And on our vests, our arms descried,
" Revealed an argent steed whose pride
" Trampled a snake of or:
" And both, depending at our side,
" Defensive weapons bore.
" Mine was a golden-hilted brand,
" The beasts of prey to quell:—
" His, was that axe within thy hand,
" But bright was then its steel.

XIX.

" Slow, thro' the green o'erhanging shade
" Spangled with dew drops, long we strayed,
" While fluttering from the leafy spray
" The wood-dove tuned its morning lay.
" My son, like every artless child,
" Plucked as he went the flowerets wild—
" And laughed with innocent delight
" To see the cuckoo wing his flight.
" So pleasant was the walk, the day,
" When verged to noon, still saw us stray,
" *Till on the right a dreary wood*
" *Of solemn spreading pines we viewed;*
" *And on the left, where bladed grass*
" *Shewed level space for foot to pass,*
" *Close to the meadow's ample way*
" *A lofty caverned mountain lay!*

" Here I proposed our walk to end
" And to the castle back to bend,
" When over heav'n's expansion blue
" Spread a dark cloud of sable hue,
" Whose sullen look and lowering frown
" Threatened to pour the tempest down!
" This seen, the meadow quick we passed,
" *And reached a yawning cave at last,*
" *Which in the mountain's shaggy side*
" *Its gloomy shelter opened wide!*
" Lothario! thou hast viewed the scene,
" Thou in the cave of blood hast been!

XX.

" Scarce had we gained the murky cell,
" When down the rattling tempest fell,
" The thunder shook the air;

" Whistled the wind; the rain poured fast,
" And thro' the cavern's darkness, cast
" The lightning its red glare.

XXI.

" During our walk, my brother seemed
" Absorbed in gloomy thought;
" His eye strange lustre often beamed
" When mine by chance it caught.
" Often did he behold my child,
" And oft the dreary wood;
" Three times he stopped with gesture wild
" And his enormous war-axe viewed.
" I deemed he feared the beasts of prey,
" And smiling, still pursued my way.

XXII.

" How hardened is the human breast
" When it becomes to vice a prey!
" The hand to murder dark addressed,
" Fearless can wield the axe's sway,
" Tho' o'er his head, with solemn sound
" The thunder utters its command,
" And cries from heav'n's remote profound,
" Hold, Villain! hold, thy sanguine hand!
" As unsuspicious o'er my boy
" I bent, to soothe his childish dread,
" With fury hissing down from high,
" The murderous axe deep reft my head!
" Ambition to possess my land
" And rule my castle's wide domain
" Impelled his unrelenting hand
" To drive the death-blow to my brain!

"Streaming red blood—with dying groan
"Ere yet I gave my soul to air;
"Fixed on my child—oh! hadst thou known
"Deep in my breast the heart-pang there!
"See how a brother's grateful hand
"Requited my unbounded love:
"But everlasting does it stand
"In heav'n's recording book above.
"Prone-gasping, at his feet I rolled,
"As the cave's marble, pale and cold.

XXIII.

"There lay my corpse, an earthern clod,
"(Life's crimson current ever fled;)
"My mounting soul before its God—
"Hush! 'tis the mystery of the dead!

"O wondrous death! No frown appeared
"Darkening the Saviour's glorious face—
"Ye parted souls! ye angels! heard
"His lips pronounce the doom of grace!
"But I besought him not to rest
"Till he should his dread wrath fulfil;
"For who (and just the high behest)
"*Kills with the sword, the sword shall kill.*
"These eighteen years my spirit's sight
"Has looked on earthly storm and jar,
"And welcomed not the keen delight
"That sight of heav'n inspires from far.
"But stay—thou art but dust as yet—
"Let me my horrid tale repeat.

XXIV.

"Scarce given was the mortal stroke
"When wild with terror shrieked my boy,

" And thro' the storm his progress took,
" Attempting, but in vain, to fly.
" The murderer in a *corner* flung
" *His cloak and weapon dyed in blood,*
" Then, thro' the gloomy cavern sprung,
" And fast the screaming boy pursued.
" Him on the shore he overtook,
" Who to his knee with terror clung,
" But heeding not its infant look,
" The child into the deep he flung.
" Wild was the storm—wave after wave
" Burst dreadful on the groaning shore—
" One fearful scream the infant gave
" And he beheld its form no more!"

END OF CANTO III.

Lothaire.

CANTO IV.

THE VISION.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO IV.

THE VISION.

I.

Here paused the spectre, and appeared
With agitation loftier reared,
His sunken eyeball's faded beam
Flashed with a brighter, deeper gleam,
As uttering forth a second groan,
Thus it resumed, with hollow tone.
" Back to the cave, the fatricide
" Deaf to remorse and nature sped
" And with his axe, in murder dyed,
" Dug in the hollow cave a bed:

" There, with my vesture on and sword
" He laid me, hid from mortal sight,
" Then to the *corner back restored,*
" The fatal axe, no longer bright.
" But from that hour, his guilty breast
" Ne'er knew the sweets of hope or rest.

II.

" The tempest ceased—the air was calm,
" Again the birds resumed their lay,
" The purple flowers diffused their balm
" And glorious smiled again the day.
" All nature was serene and bright,
" But Albert's bosom still was night:
" With ruffled look and seeming fear
" He drew unto my castle near,
" And loud upon the guard did call,
" To gain admittance in the wall.

" How he deceived my vassals round,
" Warrior! himself has let thee know—
" That in the forest's shade profound
" I sunk beneath a ruffian's blow;
" That by the same hands fell my son,
" And he escaped by flight alone!
" Panting, as if from loss of breath,
" He bade the guard explore the wood
" T' avenge his dear-loved brother's death—
" But thou mayest guess that nought they
" viewed..

III.

" Ten years a wretched life he led
" Ere fixed his gloomy mind to wed,
" That to a son, his ill-got power
" Might be bequeathed at death's dread
" hour!

" His vassals deemed that grief for me
" Clouded his brow with misery,
" When heav'n's still monitor within
" Reproached him for his deadly sin,
" And goading him by day and night,
" Filled him with care and pale affright.
" Close bordering upon my domain
" A neighbouring baron held his reign,
" Equal unto myself in power,
" And lord of an extended tower:
" At his decease, he left behind
" A widow of exalted mind,
" Of noble birth, and young and fair,—
" A daughter eight years old, her heir.
" My brother, thro' ambition's pride
" Made court to her, nor was denied—
" But in the marriage terms agreed
" His own heirs male should sole succeed
" To either castle—fond and vain
" His hopes, successors to obtain.

"Almira, tho' the Count she loved,
"His pride defeating, barren proved.
"More fretful year succeeding year
"He grew, to find she bore no heir;
"At last, devoid of all remorse,
"Threatened the Countess to divorce,
"Who daily losing all her bloom
"Sunk broken-hearted to the tomb!
"Six months she has not yet been dead,
"And even now 'tis in his head
"Again some titled fair to wed.
"Vain thought! for heav'n's protecting care
"Has sent him an unwelcome heir.

IV.

"The infant his unfeeling hand
"Dashed headlong in the roaring deep,
"Floating at heav'n's supreme command
"Was rescued by a merchant ship:

" This, when the tempest's rage was o'er,
" In safety reached the Gallic shore.
" To Sicily a shepherd swain
" Had voyaged in pursuit of gain,
" And for fair price his flock had sold
" And back returned with needful gold.
" A Frank was he, but little known;
" Yet virtue claimed him for her own.
" He, when the rich with scornful eye
" Passed the unheeded orphan boy
" Abandoned to the world's wide stage,
" Took pity on his helpless age,
" And brought him to his cottage lone
" And reared him as he would his son.

V.

" Lothario! when from Pagan hands
" The javelin on thy breastplate rung,

" Such was eternal fate's commands,
" The weapon but in vain was flung.
" When perished a whole crew beside
" Deep swallowed in the gulphy main,
" Thou, safe upon the surging tide
" Heardst the wild billows roar in vain.
" In neither storms, nor murderous war
" Wert thou without thy angel's care.
" Thy mind retains, when slumbering low
" Thou saw'st the visions in the cave:
" No wonder they appeared—for know
" *Thou slep'st upon—thy father's grave!*

VI.

" Start not—for interposing heav'n
" That justly tried thy opening youth,
" Thee now in wondrous sort has giv'n
" To know this unexpected truth.

" A tempest did thy form survey
" Cast helpless in the ocean's roar;
" In the same spot a stormy day
" Has brought thee to thy native shore.
" Haste to the king—Messina soon,
" Where now he stays, thine eyes shall
" greet;
" There, lowly-bending at his throne,
" The story I have told, repeat.
" If this he doubts—a train demand
" To search the dark-concealing cave,
" And soon my skeleton and brand
" Shall be beheld within the grave.
" Go, and Lord Albert bold *arraign*
" *Guilty of foulest murder's stain!*

VII.

"Fear not—the Providence whose care
"Preserved thee from his fatal snare,
"Also in this thy life shall tend
"And give thy suit a happy end:
"For never can my spirit rest
"Till thou shalt justly hold thine own,
"And vengeance from thy arm addrest
"Falls on my murderous brother down.
"Go, prosper—tho' unseen of thee,
"I ever near thy form will be."

VIII.

Scarce finished was the sound,
When where the grisly spectre stood

Lothario in amazement viewed
Nought but the landscape round.
So lightning in the stormy sky
With sudden flash appears,
And then as sudden from the eye
In darkness disappears.
Lothario stood with kindling eye
In thought, beyond controul—
He found himself in birth as high
As he was high of soul.
He gave a stride, and in his hand
Shook the huge axe like some light brand,
As if to war addrest—
" My murdered father! no—by heav'n!
" Till vengeance to thy ghost is giv'n
" I will not know of rest.
" Albert! well might this axe and cloak
" Alter to pale thy guilty look
" And throw thee to the floor;

"These, with thy brother's slaughter red,
"From the dark cave where lay they spread,
"His son unconscious bore.
"Tremble, thou wretch! the storm scowls
"o'er—
"And heav'n will bear thy crimes no more."

IX.

He ceased—but passion's sudden rise
Still swelled along his frame—
He clenched his axe, and from his eyes
The flashing sparkles came.
Full to the soul—in wrath, yet sad,
Striding he gained the distant town,
Ere in his evening glory clad
The sun unto the west sunk down.

Which feebly in a summer's sky
Is heard among the reeds to sigh.

XII.

"Lord Albert! see thy buried wife
"By thy unkindness robbed of life!
"Oh! how unfeeling was thy doom
"Me from thy presence to remove,
"Because th' Almighty closed my womb,
"Tho' true and tender in my love.
"No son could thy Almira bear
"For heav'n beheld thy rightful heir;
"Yet him, unconscious such, the time
"Thou wouldst have sentenced for thy crime,
"Doomed innocent unto the grave
"Thyself from thy own fears to save.
"Oh! thou hast added crime to crime
"And now draws near th' appointed time!

"Think of the foulness of thy deed
"To make thy noble brother bleed,
"Ambition's lust to satisfy;
"Yet what to thee did he deny?

XIII.

"But human cunning—oh! how vain,
"Against protecting heav'n's decree—
"For know the child, in savage vein
"Thy hand dashed headlong in the sea—
"That very child, thy kindred blood,
"Now grown to man, and blooming fair,
"Saved by his angel from the flood,
"Thine eyes have seen in young Lothaire!
"Deem not, by dark ambition led,
"The axe with his pure blood to stain,
"Far from thy power the youth is fled
"Yet shalt thou see him soon again:

" When the unrighteous sentence late
" Thy lips pronounced should be his fate,
" Shall justly on thyself be turned—
" *Thy head shall from thy neck be hewed*
" *And thou shalt render blood for blood!*
" So shall thy evil pride be spurned!
" And know the axe shall give the blow
" That laid thy murdered brother low!
" Awake—nor scorn the vision giv'n,
" Implore for grace, offended heav'n—
" Save thy immortal part, ere death
" Shall rob thee of repentance' breath!"

XIV.

The spirit fled with mournful cry,
Lord Albert, starting, woke—
Round the dark room he bent his eye
But nothing met his look.

He listened—all was still—cold fear
Made rise in bristly locks his hair;
His eyeballs with expanded ray
  Strained on the night-shade brown,
And from his forehead in dismay
  The cold drops trickled down.
O gladly did Lord Albert view
  The morning's dawning ray,
Transform the heavens to liquid blue
  And lead the golden day.

XV.

He quelled the terror in his breast
  And sought the hall below,
And as the judgment chair he prest,
His face in feigned composure drest
  No mark of dread did shew.

Around him thronged the tenant band,
And warders armed with spear and brand;
The rest, expectant of the sight,
Stood in the galleries' lofty height.
Edwina, with her maidens there
Looked leaning in the hall,
Fearful, if absent, upon her
Suspicion's glance might fall.
" Lead forth thy captive to his fate,
" Chief warder!" so the Count began,
" No monk has reached the castle gate,
" Which proves his falsehood, clear and
" plain."

XVI.

The chief before him took his stand,
Fear and amazement in his look,

(The keys and fetters in his hand)
And thus unto the Baron spoke:
" Forgive me, Count! and let thy grace
" Thy vassal from thy wrath protect,
" Since of Chief Warder I held place
" Thou never didst my zeal suspect;
" Yet when this morn I sought the hall
" To take the chain's key from the wall,
" Tho' there it hanging stood unmoved,
" I found the rusty axe removed:
" And when the dungeon I drew nigh,
" Tho' safe and fast the door I found,
" Yet entering, nothing met my eye
" Except these fetters on the ground.
" The warders that on watch did wait
" Can vouch that no one passed the gate,
" And I believe he was in truth
" Some fiend in likeness of a youth!"

XVII.

As hoarded powder, when it feels
  By chance, a sparkle's glimmering rays,
At once its nature dread reveals
  By bursting into sudden blaze;
So from the furious Baron's eyes
Flashed kindling anger and surprise—
" Ho, Warders! to the same dark cell
  " Conduct your leader's pace,
" There, closely fettered, let him dwell
  " And fill his captive's place;
" Whom do I not discover soon
" The sentence shall on him fall down!"
He said, and found the *vision true*,
And, raging, from the hall withdrew.

XVIII.

While thus the castle was at jar
  Fearing the angry Baron's frown,
He whom they searched (escaped them far)
  Had gained Messina's distant town.
Close to the sea, whose billows beat
The marble of its stately feet
  Messina circled vast;
Its ample squares and streets of stone
Bright in the purple glory shone,
That, seated on his western throne,
  The sun of evening cast.
The city to Lothaire was known,
For when a soldier's rank alone
  In Philip's host he bore,
He, with the Gauls, was quartered there
What time dissention's artful snare
  Threatened the town with gore.

For in the suburbs and the fort
The English held their nigh resort,
And injured by the Messinese,
Threatened their citadel to seize.
Sicilians and the Gauls in vain
  Their lion-legions would appal,
Who routing soon th' opposing train
  Their standard planted on the wall.

XIX.

Where his broad palace stretched its towers
The king now passed his festive hours,
And with his lords carousing, quaffed
The ruby wine's luxurious draught;
When at the pillared entrance stood
Lothario, whom no sooner viewed,
The centinel with threatening spear
Demanded of his business there;

While at so strange a figure's view
A crowd around the warrior drew.

XX.

Fearing his entrance to retard,
The Captain of the Royal Guard
He asked to see—who straightway came,
Of martial port, and manly frame.
" I wonder not," the knight begun,
" My figure this amazement draws;
" Yet see in me a baron's son
" Come to the king on pressing cause.
" Late wrecked on the Calabrian shore,
" Escaped the stormy ocean's roar—
" These in a cavern I beheld
" And, by necessity compelled
" Took up, my naked form to hide,
" And quell the forest-monster's pride.

" Permit me Tancred to survey,
" My suit admits of no delay."

XXI.

The Captain shook his plumed head
  A moment, as if lost in doubt,
At length unto the palace sped
  And called the lord in waiting out.
To him he told what said the knight
And brought him to Lothario's sight.
The nobleman in fixed amaze
Long at his strange attire did gaze,
Examined well his mien and air
And questioned many a time Lothaire—
Then bade him with the Captain stay
  Till Tancred's pleasure should be known,
To whom he bent his instant way
  And told him what the youth had shewn.

XXII.

Back he returned—" His Majesty
" Grants to thy suit thy entrance here;
" But ere his person thou canst see
" In other garb thou must appear!"
He spoke—at once the guard withdrew;
Lothario passed the gateway thro',
And to the palace, circling wide,
Quick followed his illustrious guide;
Who passing many a stately dome
Conducted him within a room,
And turning short, the knight addrest—
" Here stay, the monarch's royal guest!
" Who on thy person gives to wait
" His servants with a robe of state.
" These will serve up a prompt repast,
" For well I guess unwilling fast

" Has been thy lot—when comes the night
" I will admit thee to his sight,
" Nor need recal unto thy mind
" To leave thy axe and cloak behind,
" Since thou may'st after, if of use,
" These, as thy witnesses produce."

XXIII.

Here he withdrew—his axe and cloak
  Lothario in a closet placed,
And from his head the green spray took
  And with a better covering graced.
In purple robe and crimson vest
He ate of the imperial feast,
But tho' before him spread it lay
His absent thoughts were far away.

XXIV.

Now was the world obscured in night,
But still the palace walls were bright,
For many a lustre's branching row
Displayed the waxen taper's glow,
Reflecting upon gold its rays
And paler silver's virgin blaze.
Lothario, as he sat in trance
Heard footsteps suddenly advance,
And saw the lord-in-waiting stand
Before him, cap and plume in hand—
" Rise, knight! I come thy steps to bring
" Where waits to hear thy tale the king!"
Lothario rose, and following passed
Long range of chambers wide and vast

120

Adorned with sumptuous tapestry
And every mark of royalty;
Till where the king alone remained
The private audience room they gained.

END OF CANTO IV.

Lothaire.

CANTO V.

THE ARRAIGNMENT.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO V.

THE ARRAIGNMENT.

I.

Tancred, tho' virtue in his heart
Bore scarcely but the better part—
Yet gracious to his nobles was,
Tho' stern he ruled the vulgar race.
Within his countenance was descried
Ambition and despotic pride,
Yet from his eyes with kindling gleam
The monarch-warrior's soul would beam.
Tho' he refused in holy strife
To risk his own or people's life,

Conscious of his unsettled sway,
Yet feared he not the sanguine fray.
A cap with gems entwined around
His kingly head in splendour crowned:
His mantle was of Tyrian dye
  And bordered with a fringe of gold—
Close seated on his royal thigh
  The dagger lay of richest mould:
His vesture was of crimson stain,
His sandals of Morocco's grain.

II.

Low on his knee Lothario fell,
  The monarch courteous bade him rise
And what his suit at full to tell,
  Who fixing on the king his eyes—
"Monarch of Sicily," he said,
  "Behold *Count Rosmond's Son!*

" A baron ere untimely dead,
" Not distant from thy throne.
" In wond'rous sort protecting heav'n
" Me my descent to know has giv'n!
" Lord Albert, who now feigns to own
" My father's wide domain,
" With solemn charge before thy throne
" *Of murder I arraign!*"

III.

Here to the king Lothaire displayed
What his dead father's spirit said—
How in the sea himself was flung
And bred a shepherd's offspring long;
How he discovered in the cave
The cloak, and axe, and earthen grave;
How in a dungeon he was thrown,
And saved from death by flight alone:

Each circumstance at full he gave,
And added, if explored the grave,
His father's skeleton and blade
Would prove the truth of what he said.

IV.

The monarch seemed awhile to muse,
Then thus gave forth his inward thought:
" 'Tis eighteen years ago, the news
" Of Rosmond's death to court was
" brought;
" 'Twas said himself and only son
" While rambling in a forest lone,
" Ruffians attacked, and by their steel
" They both assassinated fell!
" 'Twas also said that Albert's flight
" Saved him alone from equal fate—
" Both tales look fair, but which is right
" Is difficult for man to state.

"Lord Albert is a powerful peer
"Respected by our barons here;
"And since his Countess's decease
"His power has had no small increase.
"However, he shall straight appear
"And to thy charge reply—"
Then turning to th' attendant peer,
He added, courteously—

V.

"To thee we trust our royal guest,
"Thou take him to thy care;
"Let him within our palace rest
"And pay him honours fair.
"We also to thy care commend
"Our Lord High Constable to send
"To bid the baron to attend.
"And also to explore the cave
"And open the imagined grave,

"Buried in which should he survey
"The skeleton and falchion lay,
"Our will is, he shall bring them here
"As witness 'gainst th' arraigned peer."

VI.

So Tancred spoke; obeisance low
  Lothario made, and left the dome,
Then fired with hope and vengeful glow
  Returned to his allotted room.
There, in the visions of the night
His father's spectre rose to sight,
And pointing to his ghastly head
Where the sharp axe had driven red,
Called vengeance on his murderer down,
Then disappeared with sullen frown.
Tho' guiltless was Lothario's breast
That night he never knew of rest.

VII.

Scarce did the morn its gleam unfold,
Scarce tip the mountain-tops with gold,
When the Lord Constable prepared
Attended by a numerous guard
  Tancred's high pleasure to fulfil!
With golden rod and blazoned crest
In all his haughty costume drest,
The spear-points glittering at his back,
He spurred his steed the nearest track
  And crossed the city hill.

VIII.

'Twas noon ere he beheld arise
The Baron's towers before his eyes,

He halted here his train,
Short rest to give each panting steed
That afterwards with better speed
The town they might regain.
Himself towards the castle rode
To enter sole the Count's abode.
The centinel beheld afar
Steel glittering like impending war
And quick alarmed the guard,
Who on the ramparts took their place
In armour that diffused keen blaze
The threatened storm to ward.
Their chieftain to the Count revealed
What coming squadron he beheld.

IX.

The Constable beside the gate
His fiery courser reined,

Revealed the rod that shewed his state,
And called unto the band—
" Ho! set your castle portals wide,
" The Lord High Constable am I!
" Sent by the king, I hither ride—
" Open, and no reply!"
These accents scarcely had he said
When wide the portals stood displayed;
Along the drawbridge swift he rode
Where due respect the warders shewed,
Then in the court-yard did dismount
And sought the mansion of the Count.

X.

The Baron at the hall-door stood
To welcome his high guest,
But from his face soon fled the blood
When thus he was addrest:

" Lord Albert, at the sovereign's throne
" A noble stranger now remains,
" Who calls himself Count Rosmond's son
" *And thee of murder bold arraigns!*
" I am commissioned by the king
" Thy person to his throne to bring.
" I pray thee then make little stay,
" His will admits of no delay."

XI.

The Count recovering from surprise,
Armed with a haughty glance his eyes—
" Lord Constable! the royal will
" I quickly shall obey—
" But ere the mandate I fulfil
" Permit me first to say—
" The reptile who has dared arraign
" Lord Albert at the throne

" Guilty of murder's foulest stain,
" This sham Count Rosmond's Son!
" Shall soon upon the gibbet rue
" The licence of his tongue;
" Or mourn in streams of sanguine hue
" This strange and daring wrong!
" Ho, pages! bring my coal-black steed,
" So shall I know the truth with speed!"

XII.

The coal-black courser soon was brought,
To all the arts of battle taught,
With eye of fire and arching mane
Prancing, it seemed to scorn the rein.
Of Albert 'twas the favourite steed
And matched the rapid gale in speed.
The baron on the saddle sprung;
To the steed's hoof the archway rung

As o'er the drawbridge pranced its pride
The Lord High Constable beside.
Soon did they join the distant train
And there, their mettled coursers rein.
To the commander of the band
Beckoned the Constable his hand,
And whispering, said, "With half the train
"While I the palace walls regain,
"Take thou the other half, and ride
"Towards the cave, where leads the guide;
"Dig up the grave, and quickly bring
"Whate'er thou viewest to the king."
He spoke—divided was the train,
And soon did part the city gain.

XIII.

The other half the road pursued
That led unto the cave of blood;

Lothario to the leading guide
Had carefully its site descried.
Soon came the band to where *the wood*
Of solemn pines umbrageous stood,
And next across the meadow's way
To where the lofty mountain lay;
Deep yawning in its hollow side
The gloomy cavern they espied,
And entering in the dreary cave
Beheld the grass-grown earthen grave!
This opening *(rotted half the bone)*
They saw a human skeleton,
And in its sheath beneath it laid,
With golden hilt, a rusty blade;
With these the band the city gained
As eve the skies with purple stained.

XIV.

When on the orient's cheek the light
Gleamed like the ruby's glow to sight
And trembled on the city spires—
What time the morning star retires,
The Lord High Constable arrayed
  In all his office' pride,
Lord Albert to the throne conveyed
  Lothario by his side.
The skeleton, the cloak, and brand
  And axe besmeared with gore,
As evidence, his following band
  Before the monarch bore.

XV.

Lord Albert started, when his eye
  The mouldered cloak surveyed,

And turned his cheek to ashen dye
  When seen the axe's blade.
But when the falchion so well known
He saw, and ghastly skeleton!
Lord Albert! then, thy utmost pride,
Thy guile, and fear of shame beside,
The unexpected sight before
Scarce kept thee upright on the floor.
His robe unto his front he drew
And wiped the cold convulsive dew
  That sudden gathered there.
Wild beat his heart, his head swam round,
And half he muttered forth some sound
  That mingled with the air.
At last, with effort great, to rest
He hushed the throbbings of his breast
And all his wonted pride renewed,
Haughty before his sovereign stood.

XVI.

Tancred high-seated on his throne
In all his regal splendour shone;
The purple robe bright fringed with gold
Fell to his feet in glittering fold,
The collar of proud knighthood prest
His neck, the star adorned his breast—
The crown upon his awful head
Rich lustre from its jewels shed—
The golden sceptre filled his hand,
Marking the ruler of the land,
Topped with a ruby's sparkling glow—
His vesture was as white as snow.
The utmost silence reigned profound
The public audience room around,
Where barons proud and knights appeared,
When thus the sovereign's voice was heard:

"Now, knight! before Lord Albert shew
"In what appears his honour stained!
"Vouch to the truth, so may he know
"Before us why he stands arraigned."

XVII.

Lothario paused, then fixed his eyes
On Albert, and with solemn voice
That reached to every ear—
"Baron! dost thou *my person* know,
"Or do *these witnesses* not shew
"Why thou art summoned here?
"*Know I am he, who, when a child*
"*Thy arm in ocean's billows wild*
"*Hurled headlong to destroy!*
"But God, from his empyreal sphere
"Bent down his ever-open ear,
"And heard my infant cry.

" Saved by a ship, a peasant's care,
" O peers! sustained me as Lothaire,
" And long I kept his flock,
" Deeming myself his son; at last
" To Syria's sacred soil I passed
" And joined the mortal shock!
" My actions in the sanguine fight
" Caused Gallia's king to make me knight.

XVIII.

" Soon after from the battle plain
" The royal chief withdrew,
" And ploughing ocean's fields again
" Calabria rose to view.
" The vessel where myself remained
" Struck on a rock, not far from land,

" Urged by a tempest's force—
" How I escaped, and found this cloak
" And gory axe, and with them took
" Unto thy towers my course,
" Lord Albert! well to thee is known,
" And how within a dungeon thrown
" Lest eye thy baseness should explore,
" I lay—to die at morning's glow—
" But what thou never yet could'st know,
" I 'scaped by a trap-door.
" Near mid-day as with toil I sunk,
" I met the strange, mysterious *monk*.
" Lord Albert! he threw back his cowl—
" Judge, peers! the horror of my soul,
" When, dashed with spattered brain and
" blood,
" Deep in his head a gash I viewed!
" Barons! it was my father's ghost!
" Who to my ear the tale of blood
" Revealed, as in amazement lost
" Trembling with rage and grief I stood.

" He told me in the cave were laid
" His buried skeleton and blade."

XIX.

Lothario here marked out to view
The cloak and axe's sanguine hue,
And shewed upon the skeleton
The cloven skull's dissevered bone,
Which with the axe exact did fit
When placed its blade within the split.
Then from the sheath he drew the brand
Which long withstood his straining hand,
And graven on the rusty blade
Count Rosmond's arms to sight displayed,
  For with his garment rubbing o'er
The steel, to every eye descried
Was seen, *an argent steed, whose pride*
  Trampled a snake of or.

He added then—" These shewn to sight,
" I claim, O king! my lawful right;
" I claim my father's just domain,
" *And Albert of his death arraign!*"

XX.

A sullen murmur filled the dome
And every face was dark with gloom;
The king on Albert fixed his eye—
" Lord Albert, thou may'st now reply."
Pride overcame the Baron's fear—
" Is this the cause that brings me here?
" Forgive, O king! my warmth of tongue,
" But ill my soul can brook this wrong.
" This villain's tale is all a lie—
" I saw myself the young Count die,
" Stretched bleeding by his father dead
" While for my life perforce I fled.

" That axe and cloak I flung away
" The better to insure my flight,
" Which when my eyes did first survey
" On this pretended robber knight,
" I charged him with my brother's blood,
" And from his neck his head had hewed
" But for th' unknown trap-door.
" However, ere my footsteps fled
" Two of th' assassins I laid dead,
" Whence come those spots of gore.
" Surely, my liege! this bandite's tale
" Will never on thy ear prevail;
" As he and his colleagues no doubt,
" Fearing their crime would be found out,
" Buried the body in the cave
" Together with the well-known glaive,
" And there my cloak and axe concealed
" Lest they the track they took revealed."

XXI.

Lothario's eyeballs sparkled flame—
" Think'st thou to hide thy head from shame
" Thou fratricide and worse than fiend,
" And dar'st thou innocence pretend ?
" Did'st thou not say a ruffian's *knife*
" Thy noble brother robbed of life ?
" Look, where *an axe's rift* is shewn
" Ev'n now upon his skeleton.
" But twenty springs have passed my head,
" And eighteen years has he been dead :
" How could I then his murderer be ?
" This proves thy tale a forgery.
" But ev'n the deed did *robbers* do,
" That *gold* had not escaped their view ;
" That falchion's hilt of massy ore
" Their booty they had gladly bore.

" Besides, why in the *cave alone*
" Was found thy brother's skeleton,
" Where did they bury then his *son?*"

XXII.

O Truth! when on the countenance bright
Burns thy divine exalted light;
When like a flood thy accents roll
Indignant, from th' impassioned soul;
Guilt stands abashed, its purpose crost,
And all its hardened front is lost.

XXIII.

This Albert felt—as drives the gale
Now stormy loud, now murmuring weak,

Successively so red and pale
  Suffused the guilty Baron's cheek.
The *vision* once again employed
His thought, but it was checked by pride.
" Villains are always smooth of tongue,"
  Feigning composure, thus he spoke;
" And therefore to revenge this wrong
  " To more than words I now must look.
" Tancred, to shew what artful lie
  " Is levelled at my spotless fame,
" Him that arraigns me I defy
  " And with him knightly combat claim.
" To-morrow, girt with helmet's shade,
  " Buckler, and hauberk's iron coat,
" I trust my sharp-avenging blade
  " Shall thrust his falsehood down his
    " throat!"

XXIV.

"Thy combat I accept," replied
Lothario, roused with kindling pride,
"And trust, altho' my words be few
"This arm will give thy crimes their due—
"And thus revenge my father dead!"
He ceased, and thus the monarch said:
"To-morrow be the combat tried,
"The cause, I grant it, to decide.
"Lord Constable! be thine the care
"The lists and barriers to prepare.
"Lothario, we will all things grant,
"Armour and steed unto thy want.
"Now with the challenged person's claim
"Thy weapons for the combat name."
The warrior to the king returned,
While all his soul within him burned;

" Since then it with thy will accords,
" To-morrow, before all these lords
" With axe and spear the strife I try,
" And heav'n the guilty doom to die!"
He said, and Tancred gave assent,
And from the dome, th' assembly went.

END OF CANTO V.

Lothaire.

CANTO VI.

THE COMBAT.

LOTHAIRE.

CANTO VI.

THE COMBAT.

I.

Soon as the rosy gleam of day
  Purpled the glowing ocean's breast,
A crowd, the combat to survey,
  Tumultuous from the city pressed.
The Constable had placed a guard
Around the lists his care prepared
  Th' intruding vulgar to repell:
Spears glittered there in threatening wood,
And where the royal seat was viewed
  Strong archers leaned on bows of steel.

In rear of these, in mail arrayed,
The horsemen grasped the gleamy blade.
In royal garb the sovereign came
Followed by knight, and peer, and dame,
And pressed the awful judgment seat,
A silver footstool at his feet.
The nobles sat around in row
On crimson seats, a splendid show.
Beauty and valour there combined
By far the pomp of dress outshined.

II.

Now at the monarch's high command
Around the lists deep silence reigned.
The Constable before the throne
In his insignia, mounted, shone,
Where gold and purple's mingled glow
Adorned a raiment white as snow;

High on his head three plumes advanced
Light to the sportive breezes danced;
His left hand had the bridle's hold,
His right displayed the rod of gold.
With the king's arms emblazoned round
His courser's trappings touched the ground;
A bannered trumpet stood beside,
Its silk, adorned with equal pride.
With voice distinct he read aloud
The cause of combat to the crowd:
"A stranger knight—Lothaire his name,
"Lays to Count Rosmond's castle claim;
"And styles himself that baron's son—
"His right demanding at the throne.
"*The present lord he does arraign*
"*Guilty of foulest murder's stain!*
"Ho, warders! set the barriers clear,
"And give th' arraigner to appear."

III.

The barriers were unclosed with speed,
  The thronging crowd withdrew,
And mounted on a milk-white steed
  Lothaire appeared to view.
Far different was the warrior's look
To when he bore the thread-bare cloak—
High on his casque, by breezes swayed,
  The lofty plume waved white;
In polished steel his limbs arrayed,
  Diffused a glorious light.
The axe was at his saddle-bow,
But that revealed no fulgent glow,
'Twas that by which his father fell
Still rusty and blood-dashed its steel;
For he the self-same weapon vowed
Should reek with his foul murderer's blood!

Grasped in his hand the glittering spear
  A glancing light displayed,
And eager of the stern career
  His charger boldly neighed.
The warrior entering in the ring
Low bowed his head unto the king,
And many a lady's breast of snow
Throbbed at his sight with secret glow.

IV.

The Lord High Constable next read
The challenge, and resuming said;
" Lord Albert does the crime deny
  " Which makes him murder-stained,
" And brands with foulest falsity
  " The knight, by whom arraigned;
" And in his honour's sacred cause,
  " Before his sovereign's sight,

"Lothario, by the knightly laws
"Defies to mortal fight.
"Ho, warders! set the barriers clear,
"And let the challenger appear!"

V.

The barriers were unclosed with speed,
The thronging crowd withdrew,
And mounted on his coal-black steed
Lord Albert rode to view.
His vizor closed, with sombre shade
Concealed his face's gloom,
Loose over which terrific played
In air, a blood-red plume.
The polished axe beside his thigh
A broad refulgence beamed
But dusky to the gazer's eye
His sable armour gleamed.

He wore those arms of sullen glow
Grief for his brother's death to shew,
But 'twas his ardent hope, in fray
His arm his hated son would slay.
Before the throne he stooped his crest
And fast the beamy spear comprest.

VI.

The Constable resumed again
The formal, ceremonious strain:
" Tancred, unable to decide
" In such important cause,
" Wills, that the matter fair be tried
" By arms, and knighthood's laws.
" The challenge is accepted bold,
" The challenged does his weapons hold,
" And who subdues in mortal fight
" Shall be proclaimed henceforth as right,

"And to the baronies succeed,
"So has the law of arms decreed.
"Sound trump the signal to contend,
"And heav'n the better cause defend!"

VII.

The trumpet pealed a gallant sound,
And from the barriers with a bound
  The steeds impatient sprung;
Scarce could the keen spectator's eye
Their fiery rapid course descry—
  The earth beneath them rung.
With rested spear, and crest declined,
The adverse champions fiercely joined
  And dreadful was the shock—
Staggered before the headlong force
Back on his crupper fell each horse;
  The splintered lances broke.

Ere shivered by the stern career
  It sparkling touched the ground,
True to its aim Lothario's spear
  The hostile helmet found.
But tho' the point was firmly sent
Albert endured the storm unbent.
Not so the knight his foeman's stroke
Sustained—the lance, altho' it broke,
  By the tough plates repelled,
Yet from his steed, tho' seated fast,
Six paces back it headlong cast
  Lothario on the field.

VIII.

Lord Albert soon with spur and rein
Recovered his war-steed again,
And distant on the listed ground
Saw lie his adversary stunned.

Joyed at the sight, his axe he drew,
And swift to take th' advantage flew;
  But by the shouts awoke,
The gallant knight his danger viewed,
Nor failed to raise his axe of blood—
  It met the Baron's look!
In time to meet his rushing foe
He seized it from the saddle bow,
For frighted by the flourished steel
  In Albert's lifted hand,
His courser that so lately fell
  Had scarce its feet regained,
When round the lists it urged its course
With fiery speed and madding force,
And had he not from its fixed stand
Snatched the broad axe into his hand,
The weapon it had borne away,
And left him to sure death a prey.

IX.

As when a swain, whose trembling eye
Sees in his path a serpent lie,
Recoils with wild affright;
So Albert when his eyes surveyed,
Not seen before, the well-known blade,
Back started at the sight.
His axe, high lifted o'er the foe,
Dropt to his knee without a blow:
And "Cursed fiends of hell," he cried,
Half raving with amaze,
"Is not the world sufficient wide
"But that fell axe in murder dyed
"Must ever blast my gaze?
"Dæmons, avaunt! 'tis not my time,
"Nor will I yet confess the crime,

" Tho' from my neck my head be hewed
" And I must render blood for blood !"

X.

He scarce had ended here,
When thundering on his plated thigh
The hostile axe, first brandished high,
Came down with stroke severe.
The strong greaves yielded to its force,
And deep was driv'n the wound—
Lord Albert scarcely kept his horse,
While streamed his blood around.

XI.

As thunder ere it spends its force
Stamps in the rifted rocks its course;

So rousing at the sudden wound,
His axe the Baron whirled around,
  And urged it on his foe.
Lothaire! thou neededst then to wield
The breadth of a protecting shield
  To save thee from the blow.
Sidelong his tempered helm it took,
  And rent the crashing steel,
And then with loud resounding shock
  Upon his shoulder fell.
The ringing plates in splinters broke,
But there was spent the lightning stroke.
The furious steel just grazed his head
  And shared the hair around,
Then on his shoulder blade lay dead—
  Lothario felt no wound.
The Baron with the headlong sway
  To his right foot below
Was sudden brought, where bent he lay,
  So fierce he swung the blow.

XII.

Lord Albert! o'er thy fated head
Death's angel shook his pinions dread,
And offered mercy, spurned before,
To thee returned from heav'n no more.
Not idly did Lothario see
The offered opportunity:
With either hand upraised on high
He swung the axe of fatal dye,
And urged it hissing down the wind,
As low the Baron lay reclined.
The gorget's steel opposed in vain,
In vain the spinal bone withstood,
Thro' both the weapon ploughed amain,
And from the neck his head it hewed.
Out gushed the life-stream on the plain,
While the scared steed with loosened rein

Scoured the wide lists, and at its feet
Dragged the cold body, lost its seat.
The severed head, as on the ground
It fell, sprung upwards with a bound—
Unclosed its eyes—the conqueror viewed,
And gasping, muttered, " *Blood for*
" *Blood!*"
Then sunk upon the gory field
With countenance pale and eyelid sealed.

XIII.

A shout of horror swelled around
As touched the ghastly head the ground.
While to himself Lothario said
" At last behold the vengeance paid,
" O Father! to thy honoured shade.
" And thou, lost wretch! tho' pale and cold
" Thy headless corpse on earth lies rolled,

" May penitence before thy death
" Have saved thee, tho' with dying breath."
The Constable, the steeds at large
Gave to th' attending warders' charge,
Himself dismounting, to the throne
Conducted Rosmond's valiant son.
The monarch rose with gracious air—
" Hail Rosmond's now undoubted heir :
" Possess henceforth thy lawful right
" Bold victor in unequal fight.
" The loyalty thy sire has shewn
" May'st thou possess towards the throne.
" Ourself and Peers heard Albert's breath
" Plead guilty to his brother's death ;
" His body to the birds a prey
" Shall on the common dunghill lay.
" But ere both baronies thou share,
" Before us thou must first declare
" To wed the Lady Countess' heir."

XIV.

"To her my liberty I owe;"
Lothaire returned with kindling glow,—
"Would she consent my hand to bless
"'Twould consummate my happiness.
"But yet permit, my liege, a tomb
"Yon headless body to inhume,
"Since kindred binds me to the dead
"And for his crimes his death has paid."
The king his generous suit admired,
And granting, with his court retired.

XV.

That very day to his domain
Lothario by a speedy train

Sent the proud corpse in death low laid,
The skeleton and fatal blade,
Together with the axe and vest,
Then staid the monarch's royal guest.
But when the morn with vermil stain
Brightened the face of heav'n again,
Alone he sought his sire's abode
Following his former lonely road.
In musing thought the warrior passed,
Tho' his white charger speeded fast;
For this the monarch, as his gift,
With the brave heir of Rosmond left.
Sweet was the scene the morning shewed,
And far along the rugged road
His progress had he took,
When the green bank his eye surveyed
Defended by an oak's dark shade
Where gushed the limpid brook;
Alighting, to a bough he tied
His steed, and by the oak espied

Edwina's *wicker gift;*
A wild rose had entwined it round,
And gently from the flowery ground
The basket did he lift.
What pleasure did his bosom prove,
How panted all his heart with love
To find it there still rest!
Again he mounted on his steed,
And prest, amidst the courser's speed,
The trifle to his breast.

XVI.

Soon did he reach the *jutting rock,*
Above whose summit, torn and broke,
The *wild ash* broad-projecting spread
That formed *a covering for his head.*
Then thro' the *plain* his course pursued
Towards the distant *castle-wood.*

Scarce had he gained the twilight shade
When midst the trees his eye surveyed
A figure in a cowl arrayed.
Scarce could his hand the steed restrain
That starting, struggled with the rein,
And snorting, shewed the signs of fear
As at some strange appearance near.
The pathway the tall figure crossed,
He saw it was his father's ghost.

XVII.

"Joy to my Son," thus solemn spoke
The Spectre with erected look;
"God's high decree has been fulfilled—
"The killer has in turn been killed.
"With thee thy rightful titles rest
"And now my soul shall know of rest.

"Angelic music greets my ear,
"I may not longer tarry here.
"Farewell! to better realms I fly
"And never more shall meet thine eye,
"Till the last trumpet's final sound
"Summons the world to judgment round,
"When once more I shall join my clay,
"Then, of a substance bright as day
"As spring transforms at winter's close
"The seed unto the balmy rose.
"Then virtue's fiery trials past,
"All shall be happiness at last,
"And thro' eternity's wide year
"Never again be known a tear."
He ceased—the cowl and visage pale
Changed like the fickle ocean-gale.
The first assumed a shining glow
And turned as white as winter snow,
The next with rays of glory crowned
Diffused a dazzling light around,

And midst a strain whose cadence sweet
No mortal music can repeat,
The Vision vanished from his sight
Veiled in a cloud of purple light.

XVIII.

Lothario gazed awhile entranced
Then slowly to his towers advanced,
While thoughts beyond the sphere of earth
Took in his lifted soul their birth.
The watchman from the ramparts high
Told that Count Rosmond's Son drew nigh;
At which the gates were wide displayed
And o'er the fosse the drawbridge laid;
While he, attended by the guard,
Dismounted in the castle-yard.
The vassals gathered round in crowd
And fealty in due form vowed,
As to their new-made lord they bowed.

Lothaire forgot not in his joy
  The Warder Chief, who shut from light,
They told him did imprisoned lie,
  But bade him be brought forth to sight.
" *I hope, Sir Chief! your only fare*
" *Was not the dungeon's stagnant air*
  " *But better was decreed;*
" *I also hope, that when alone*
" *You slumbered on the flinty stone*
  " *A couch you did not need;*
" *And that your eyes did not survey*
" *Old goblins, being shut from day;*
" *And that 'twas pleasant to reside*
" *So far beneath the river's tide.*
"Such words, Sir Warder! once were thine;"
He added, " But they are not mine.
" Again thy former office fill—
  " But henceforth be thou taught to know,
" The feeling heart will never smile
  " When bleeds another's breast with woe."

Then waiting no reply, he sped
Towards Edwina's room his tread,
But first within the basket set
His baron's golden coronet.

XIX.

No muffling cowl with envious shade
Then hid from sight the beauteous maid,
Her slender form was plainly seen
As clusters swell thro' vine-leaves green;
And on her face the crimson glow
Contrasted to her forehead's snow,
Seemed like the rose's ardent twine
Around the fairer jessamine.
Her silken locks of raven shade
Dark on her neck of ivory played:
So seems on spotless ermine set
The artful foil of sable jet.

When first Lothario trod the room
She started from her pensive gloom,
But when he caught her dark bright eye
Flushed on her cheek a deeper dye.

XX.

The Baron on a table set
The basket with the coronet,
And pointing to them, while his look
Gazed on her beauteous face, thus spoke:
" Edwina, see thy gift again
" Which in the dungeon thy fair hand
" Gave me, life's spirits to sustain,
" Against proud Albert's stern command.
" He stained him with my father's gore
" And, such heav'n's doom, is now no more.
" Ere this thou must my tale have known,
" And that I am Count Rosmond's Son.

"What, my Deliveress! unto thee
"Can I return for liberty?"

XXI.

He paused—"See there my coronet!
"With this to thee I gladly part,
"But with it, offered not as yet,
"Ah! say, wilt thou accept my heart?
"To thee I owe prosperity,
"Crown it by holy matrimony!
The melting radiance of her eyes,
The blushes glowing on her cheek,
Her swelling bosom's frequent rise
Was all the answer she could speak.
What transport did the warrior prove,
How did he bless the signs of love!

XXII.

Ere came the Baron's bridal day,
  Within a marble tomb
He placed Lord Albert's breathless clay
  Amidst the forest gloom.
An iron railing fenced it round,
An urn the lofty summit crowned.
The Chaplain many masses said
Over the dull unheeding dead,
Whose spirit at the death-pang's close
No mortal prayers could give repose.
But in the castle-vaults, where lay
  His ancestors exposed in stone,
He placed, remote from glaring day,
  His father's honoured skeleton.
High in the castle-hall displayed
He hung the golden-hilted blade,

But the red cloak and axe's glaive
He buried in Lord Albert's grave.

XXIII.

Each noble lord and lady fair
That round the neighbouring country were
  Attended at the bridal day.
The vassals shared the general joy,
And frolic, mirth, and revelry
  The moments charmed away.
And when the skies were lost in night
The castle turrets still blazed bright,
For jovial feast and cheering wine
Did with the merry dance combine;
And sounding harp and trumpet's clang
Throughout the lofty galleries rang
  In mingled chorus long:
But when the pair retired, to prove

The sacred joys of virtuous love
The Minstrel raised this song:—

XXIV.

SONG.

"How sweet is the rose when she peers o'er
"the earth,
"The queen of the garden, confest;
"Heaven drops with chaste tears in delight at
"her birth,
"And the breeze fans her beautiful breast.

"How majestic the oak when his broad head
"he rears,
"The king of the wide-spreading wood;
"Nor the tempest's nor cataract's fury he fears,
"Yet soon by the ivy is wooed.

" So lovely the virgin, who melting at woe,
" Shews virtue combined with her charms;
" Peace holds her still home in her bosom of
" snow,
" And happiness dwells in her arms.

" So noble the hero, undaunted who bears
" The storms with adversity fraught;
" Who stoops not his crest in the whirlwind
" of wars,
" Yet bends when by mercy besought!"

FINALE.

Muse of the South! on western shores
  Such song thy influence did inspire,
There, where the foamy ocean roars
  Round islands scorched with solar fire.

Dread Islands! where the Briton's breast
  Is ever lost to calm delight!
Where tyranny in sanguine vest
  Threatens the wretch that is not *white!*

Alas! how many a gallant breast
  On you is cold in kindred clay,
Not on bright honour's couch at rest,
  But victim of disease's sway!

I too, on your unhappy isles
  Have long experienced fortune's turn
Deceived by hollow friendship's smiles,
  And learnt that "*Man was made to*
    "*mourn!*"

And yet this heart has never known
  From pride of rank to crush the weak!
Tho' there, it was a crime alone
  The language of the soul to speak.

Oppression! how I hate thy rod!
  How burns my soul at slavery!
O Man! thou noblest work of God,
  Hold fast, thy birthright, Liberty!

True Liberty its king respects,
  And rank, its due attention draws,
But still its jealous eye protects,
  More dear, its country's sacred laws!

And now escaped Oppression's reign
  Escaped the isles of misery,
Dear land! I welcome thee again—
  Welcome, thou land of liberty!

Tho' thy white coasts I claim not whole,
  Thou rear'dst me in life's early morn—
Thou art the birth-place of my *soul!*
  Tho' far in distant India born!

Adieu! the noisy drum and fife!
  Ye harbor too much guile for me;
I fear not for a fickle life,
  But fear to lose my Liberty!

In generous Ireland warlike land
  To lead a peaceful life I choose,
And woo from freedom's holy hand
  The smiles of the forgotten muse!

Notes.

NOTES.

CANTO I.

Ver. XII.—*The vast embattled pile.*

This line is borrowed from a Metrical Tale, entitled the "Genii," written by Ensign Hubbard, of the 1st West India regiment. The line from which it is borrowed, runs thus—

"A dark monastic pile!"

The "Genii" has not yet been published, but will shortly appear, with "A Tour through the Islands of the Western Archipelago," by the same author, who is already known to the public, by several pieces in prose and verse. He composed the "Genii" in imitation of "Gonzalvo," a Tale of Chivalry, published by me in a Collection of Tales in Verse, printed in Edinburgh, in 1810. The "Genii," is however much superior to the original; and it was in consequence of perusing it, that the idea first struck me of writing "Lothaire."

CANTO II.

Ver. III.—*For Sion's ancient Lord.*

This was Guy of Lusignau, who, with his brother, Geoffrey, laid siege to Acre, or Ptolemais, as it was then called, in revenge of his being dispossessed of the throne of Jerusalem, or Sion, by Saladin, Caliph of Egypt, who was then extending his conquests over the whole of the East.

Ver. III.—*And Frederic's Son with all his host.*

Conrad, the Son of Frederic Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany. Frederic was the leader of the Second Crusade, and invaded Syria by land, at the head of an immense army. The treachery of the Greek Emperor embarrassed him very much on his march; but, however, in spite of all obstacles, he reached the River Belus (supposed to be the ancient Cydnus), which runs within five hundred yards of the walls of Acre. Imprudently bathing himself in this river, after the heat of battle, like his predecessor, Alexander the Great, he was seized with a violent distemper, of which he died. At his death, the command of the army devolved upon his son Conrad, who, joining Lusignau, carried on the siege of Acre.

Ver. III.—*Of Caracos, who led the van.*

This distinguished hero is mentioned in Fuller's History

of the Holy Wars, as having taught Saladin the Art of War, who gave him the command of the garrison of Acre, as it was the key to Jerusalem, and a city on that account threatened with the united attack of all the powers of Europe. What made it still more important to the Crusaders, was, that it was supposed that *the wood of the True Cross* was in this city. Caracos held out the defence of it, for nearly five years, against ten times his number, till it was at last taken by storm on the arrival of the English army, which did not arrive till about a month after that of the French.

Ver. IV.—*With secret envy fraught.*

Philip, surnamed Augustus, King of France, after having landed in Palestine with 50,000 men, was so jealous of the glory acquired by Richard the First, commonly known as Cœur de Lion, that after the reduction of Acre, he pretended to be sick, and returned to France with his army, only leaving 10,000 men with Richard, under the command of Odo, Duke of Burgundy.

Ver. V.—*But the famed plains of Askalon.*

Saladin, not arriving soon enough to the relief of Acre, encamped with his army, consisting of 300,000 men, on the plains of Askalon, to prevent the progress of Richard to Jerusalem. The army of Richard did not amount to

more than 70,000 men, of which, upwards of 40,000 were his own subjects. He however engaged, and routed Saladin, after a bloody battle, in which both wings of his army were defeated, though his centre was victorious, where he commanded in person. Saladin, after the battle, made him a present of two beautiful Arabian chargers, in compliment to his valour, and soon after concluded a two years' truce with Richard.

Ver. XVII.—*The silver sound, the soul sprung strain.*

The idea of this, and the three subsequent lines, together with the 4th line of the 4th verse in the 3d Canto, were suggested to me by the perusal of "The Mermaid," a Legendary Ballad, composed by Leyden, the Author of "The Scenes of Infancy," who died in Java. The manuscript copy that I read was lent to me by Assistant-Surgeon Noble, of the 1st West India regiment, since deceased, a gentleman of great erudition: he was the author of a popular Song, published some time ago, being at that time in the 69th regiment. The Song begins thus—

"Our king sends us notice he wants our assistance, &c."

I have been bold enough to alter and lengthen Leyden's Ballad of "The Mermaid," which I subjoin for the reader's perusal. The lines in italics are those that I have imitated.

THE MERMAID.

On Jura's heath how sweetly swell
  The murmurs of the mountain bee,
How softly mourns the writhed shell
  Of Jura's shore, its parent sea.
But softer, sweeter, o'er the deep
  Arose the Mermaid's soothing lay,
Who in her Syren grot would keep
  The constant Chief of Colonsay.
In youth's gay bloom, the brave Mac Phail
  Still blamed the lingering bark's delay,
For her he chid the flagging sail,
  The lovely maid of Colonsay!
Aloft the purple penants wave
  As parting gay from Orcna's shore,
Their gallant Chief, the seamen brave
  From Lorn's dread combat homeward bore.
"And raise," he cried, "the Song of Love
  "The maiden sung with tearful smile,
"When first o'er Jura's hills to rove
  "Afar we left the lonely isle.
"I saw the tear-drops on her cheek,
  "Her eyes with dewy lustre shine,
"And as she spoke, with pressure weak
  "Her hand she fondly clasped in mine.

" When from this ring of ruby red
  " Fades the pellucid crimson hue,
" Thy fair is numbered with the dead,
  " Or proves to thee and love untrue."
Now lightly poised, the rising oar
  Disperses wide the foamy spray,
And echoing far o'er Orena's shore
  Resounds the Song of Colonsay.

SONG.

" Softly blow thou Western breeze,
  " Softly kiss the rustling sail!
" While my Love is on the seas
  " Softly blow thou Western gale!

" Where the wave is tinged with red
  " And the russet sea-weeds grow,
" Mariners! devoid of dread,
  " Shun the shelving reefs below.

" As you pass thro' Jura's sound,
  " Bend your course by Scarpa's shore,
" Shun! oh, shun! the gulph profound
  " Where Corachtin's surges roar!

"If from that unbottomed deep,
"Dread his form, and vast his train,
"O'er the verge of Scarpa's steep
"Fierce the sea-snake rear his mane;

"Sea-green sisters of the waves
"Wide his oozy coils unwind;
"Far where boiling ocean raves
"Fast th' unwieldy monster bind.

"Ne'er, my Love, in combat fierce
"Shrink from the opposing lance,
"Tho' it hostile bosoms pierce
"Rapid as the lover's glance.

"Ne'er, my Love, in fields of fight
"Yield thy tempered keen claymore,
"Till the splinters sparkle bright
"Round thee in the battle's roar!

"Ne'er, my Love, by foes oppressed,
"From thy grasp the dirk forego,
"Till, deep plunged in foeman's breast,
"Pale he sink beneath the blow!"

Thus all to sooth the Chieftain's woe,
  Far from the maid he loved so dear,
The song arose so soft and slow,
  He seemed her parting sigh to hear.
The lonely deck he paces o'er
  Impatient for the rising day,
And still from Orcna's moonlight shore
  He turns his eyes to Colonsay;
For night had shaded all the surge
  That streaked with foam the ocean green,
When forward as the rowers urge
  Their course—a female form is seen!—
That Seamaid's form of pearly light
  Was whiter than the downy spray,
And o'er her bosom heaving bright
  Her glossy yellow ringlets play.
Borne on a foamy-crested wave
  She reached amain the bounding prow,
Then clasping fast the chieftain brave,
  Plunged in the roaring deep below!—
Oh! long beside thy feigned bier.
  The Monks their prayers of death shall say,
And long for thee, the fruitless tear
  Shall weep the maid of Colonsay!—
But downward, like a powerless corse
  The eddying waves the Chieftain bear,

He only hears the moaning hoarse
  Of waters murmuring in his ear!
The murmurs sink by slow degrees,
  No more the surges round him rave,
Lulled by the music of the seas
  He lies—beneath a Coral Cave!
In dreaming mood, he lying long
  Dares not his dazzled eyes unclose,
Till warbling wild, the Seamaid's song
  Far in the inmost cavern rose.
Soft as that Harp's unseen controul
  In morning dreams, that Lovers hear,
Whose strains steal sweetly on the soul,
  But never reach the waking ear;
Soft as the beam in gentle Spring
  That glitters thro' the tepid air,
When birds their wildest woodnotes sing,
  And flowers display their colours fair;
So melting soft the music fell,
  It seemed to sooth the fluttering spray—
Say, heard'st thou not the wild notes swell?
  Ah! 'tis the song of Colonsay!—
Like one that from a fearful dream
  Awakes, the morning light to view,
And joys to see the purple beam,
  Yet fears to find the vision true,

He heard that strain, so wildly sweet,
  Which bade his torpid languor fly;
He feared some spell had bound his feet
  And scarcely dared his limbs to try.
" These yellow sands, this sparry cave
  " Shall bend thy soul to Beauty's sway!
" Canst thou the Maiden of the Wave
  " Compare to her of Colonsay?"
Roused by that voice of silver sound
  From the paved floor he lightly sprung,
And glancing wild his eyes around
  Where the Sea Nymph seducing sung—
No form he saw of mortal mould;
  It shone like Ocean's snowy foam!
Her ringlets waved in living gold,
  Her mirror, chrystal—pearl her comb.
Her pearly comb the Syren took,
  And careless bound her tresses wild,
Still o'er her mirror stole a look
  As at the wondering youth she smiled.
Like music from the greenwood tree
  Again she raised the melting lay—
" Fair Warrior! wilt thou dwell with me,
  " And leave the maid of Colonsay?"

MERMAID's SONG.

" Bright is the Ocean Hall for me
" With sapphires and with rubies set,
" And sweet the music of the sea
" Shall sound, where we for love are met!

" How sweet to dance with gliding feet
" Along the level tide so green,
" Responsive to the zephyrs sweet
" That whisper thro' the midnight scene.

" And soft the music of the main
" Rings from the motley tortoise shell,
" Whilst moonbeams o'er the watery plain
" Seem trembling in its fretful swell!

" How sweet, when billows heave the head
" And shake their foamy crests on high,
" Serene in Ocean's sapphire bed
" Beneath the tumbling surge to lie!

" To trace with tranquil step the deep
" Where pearly drops of frozen dew
" In concave shells, unconscious sleep,
" Or shine with lustre's silvery hue.

" Then shall the Summer sun from far
" Pour thro' the wave a softer ray,
" While diamonds in our bower of spar,
" At eve shall shed a brighter day:

" Nor stormy wind, nor wint'ry gale
" That o'er the angry ocean sweep,
" Shall e'er our coral groves assail,
" Calm in the bosom of the deep.

" Thro' the green meads beneath the sea
" Enamour'd we shall fondly stray,
" Then, gentle warrior, stay with me,
" And leave the maid of Colonsay!"

" Tho' bright thy locks of glistering gold,
" Fair Syren of the foamy main,
" Thy life-blood is the water cold,
" While mine beats warm thro' every vein.

" If I within thy sparry cave
  " Should in thy snowy arms recline,
" Inconstant as the restless wave,
  " My heart would grow as cold as thine.
" In youth's first dawn I loved the maid,
  " I know her gentle heart is mine,
" And could my vows of rapture fade,
  " My heart would grow as cold as thine!"
As cygnet down, proud swelled her breast,
  Her eye confest the pearly tear—
Her hand she to her bosom prest,
  " Is there no heart for rapture here?
" These limbs, sprung from the fostering sea,
  " Does no warm blood their currents fill?
" No heart-pulse riot wild and free
  " To joy, to Love's delicious thrill?"—
" Tho' all the splendour of the sea
  " Around thy spotless beauty shine,
" That heart that riots wild and free
  " Can hold no sympathy with mine!
" Those sparkling eyes so wild and gay,
  " They swim not in the light of Love—
" The gentle maid of Colonsay,
  " Her eyes are milder than the dove.
" Ev'n now, within the lonely isle,
  " Her eyes are dim with tears for me,

" And canst thou think that syren smile
  " Can loose my soul, to dwell with thee ?"
An oozy film her limbs o'erspread
  Unfolds her lengthening scaly train,
She tossed in proud disdain her head
  And lashed with webbed fin the main.
" Dwell here alone," the Mermaid cried,
  " And view far off the Sea Nymphs play,
" Thy prison wall, the azure tide,
  " Shall bar thy steps from Colonsay !
" If e'er with fins, like Ocean's brood
  " Thou seest me cleave the glassy wave,
" Far from the daughter of the flood
  " Conceal thee, in the inmost cave !
" I feel my former soul revive,
  " My heart resents thy proud disdain,
" Nor shall a mortal boast alive
  " He scorned a daughter of the main !"
She fled—around the coral cave
  The rolling waves resume their road,
Around the mortal idly rave,
  But enter not the Nymph's abode !
And many a weary night went by
  As in the lonely cave he lay,
And many a sun rolled thro' the sky
  And poured its beams on Colonsay.

And oft beneath the silver moon
  He heard afar the Mermaid sing,
And oft to many a melting tune
  The shell formed lyres of Ocean ring.
And when the moon went down the sky
  Still rose in dreams his native plain,
And oft he thought his Love was by,
  And charmed him with some tender strain:
And heart-sick, oft he waked to weep
  When ceased that voice of silver sound;
And thought to plunge him in the deep
  That walled his chrystal cavern round.
But still the ring of ruby red
  Retained its vivid crimson hue,
And each despairing accent fled
  To find his gentle love was true.
When seven long lonely months were gone
  The Mermaid to the cavern came,
No more mishapen from the zone,
  But like a maid of mortal frame!
" Give thou to me that ruby ring
  " That on thy finger glances gay,
" And thou shalt hear the Mermaid sing
  " The song thou lov'st of Colonsay!"
" This ruby ring of crimson grain
  " Shall on thy finger glitter gay,

" If thou wilt bear me thro' the main
  " Once more to visit Colonsay."
" So thou but quit thy former flame
  " And live contented aye with me ;
" If not—incensed, my finny frame
  " Shall tear thy limbs amidst the sea !"
" Then bear me swift along the main,
  " I burn the lonely isle to see,
" And when thou bring'st me here again,
  " I plight my faith to dwell with thee."
Proud swelled her heart—she deemed at last
  To charm him with her syren strain,
To keep him in her cavern fast,
  And Love's pellucid ruby gain!
Her mortal form she swift forsook
  To bear the Chieftain thro' the main—
Joyful her webbed fins she shook,
  And spread at large her scaly strain.
This done, she clasped the Chieftain fast,
  And quickly cut the foamy spray,
And as the shelving rocks she passed
  She raised the song of Colonsay.
Trembling upon the wave, appears
  The midnight moon's uncertain smile,
As thro' the surge the Sea-Maid steers
  Her course unto the lonely isle.

In softer, sweeter strains she sung,
As by the shore they bent their way,
When light to land the Chieftain sprung,
And hailed the maid of Colonsay!
O sad! the Mermaid's gay notes fell
And died in plaintive harmony—
So sadly mourns the writhed shell
Of Jura's shore, its parent sea!
And when the circling year returns
The Sailors know the fated day,
For sadly still the Mermaid mourns
The constant Chief of Colonsay.

CANTO III.

Ver. V.—*That trembled with her silver light.*

This is borrowed from Dryden's translation of Virgil, Book vii. ver. 11.

——— "The moon was bright,
"And the sea trembled with her silver light."

Ver. VII.—*The purple light of Love displayed.*

I am indebted to Gray for this idea, Ode V.

"O'er her warm cheek and rising bosom, move
"The bloom of young desire, and purple light of Love."

CANTO IV.

Ver. 18.—*What time the rage of civil war.*

After the English and French armies had rendezvoused in the plains of Vezelay, preparatory to the second Crusade, the combined kings, on account of the difficulty of a march by land, agreed to proceed to Palestine, by sea. Their fleets were however driven by stress of weather into Port Messina, in Sicily, where they staid some time to refit their vessels. Tancred, Usurper of Sicily, did every thing in his power to foment the jealousy existing between the two kings, as not being himself one of the Crusaders, he wished to get rid of so formidable and troublesome an armament. Richard had promised to marry Adelais, the sister of Philip, but suspecting her virtue, he declined the alliance. This was the beginning of those feuds that subsisted between the two monarchs. Richard had quartered his army in the suburbs of Messina, and taken possession of a fort, that commanded the harbour, while Philip had billetted his army in the town. The Messinese having insulted the English, and being joined by the French, the English in revenge attacked the Messinese, defeated them, and in spite of their allies the French, planted the British standard on the walls of Messina. Philip being told of this, ordered some of his officers to take it down, but Richard made them desist, and added, that "he would him-

self order the standard to be taken down, to preserve a good understanding between two powers engaged in the same common cause, but that no other persons but his own subjects should attempt to take down the standard, without the utmost effusion of blood." This silenced the French king, and Richard accordingly ordered his standard to be taken down.

CANTO V.

Ver. VII.—*Scarce tip the mountain tops with gold.*

I find I have borrowed this line from Pitt, who in his Translation of Virgil, has the following similar verses.

" Now had the morn, all-beauteous, to behold,
" Tipped the blue mountains with a gleam of gold."

Ver. IX.—*Ho ! set your Castle portals wide.*

The Lord High Constable of Sicily, in those times had great powers vested in him, and was the next man in the realm to the king.

Ver. XV.—*And wiped the cold convulsive dew.*

I find, from general reading, that I have been borrowing again. Southey, in his beautiful tale of Rudiger, has these lines—

" And on his clammy forehead stood
" The cold convulsive dew.

Ver. XXI.—*But twenty springs have passed my head.*

The idea of making Lothaire refute Lord Albert's accusation, by a mention of his age, did not occur to me, till put in mind of it by Ensign French, of the 1st West India regiment, to whom I was reading the manuscript. Though only 18 years old when he died, he had written a fine poem on Friendship.

Ver. XXIII.—*Him that arraigns me I defy.*

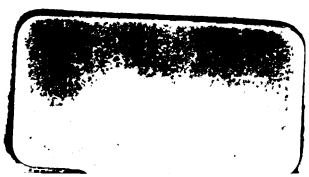
In cases of arraignment between Peers, in those days, the justice of their cause was left to the decision of arms, however convincing the proofs might be against either of the parties.

CANTO VI.

Ver. IX.—*As when a swain whose trembling eye.*

Homer and Virgil have similar comparisons.

As when some shepherd from the rustling trees
Shot forth to view, a scaly serpent sees,
Trembling and pale he starts with wild affright
And all confused precipitates his flight.

POPE'S HOMER.

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